Edward Luttwak: One Potato, Two Potato, Three . . .

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MARCH 1989

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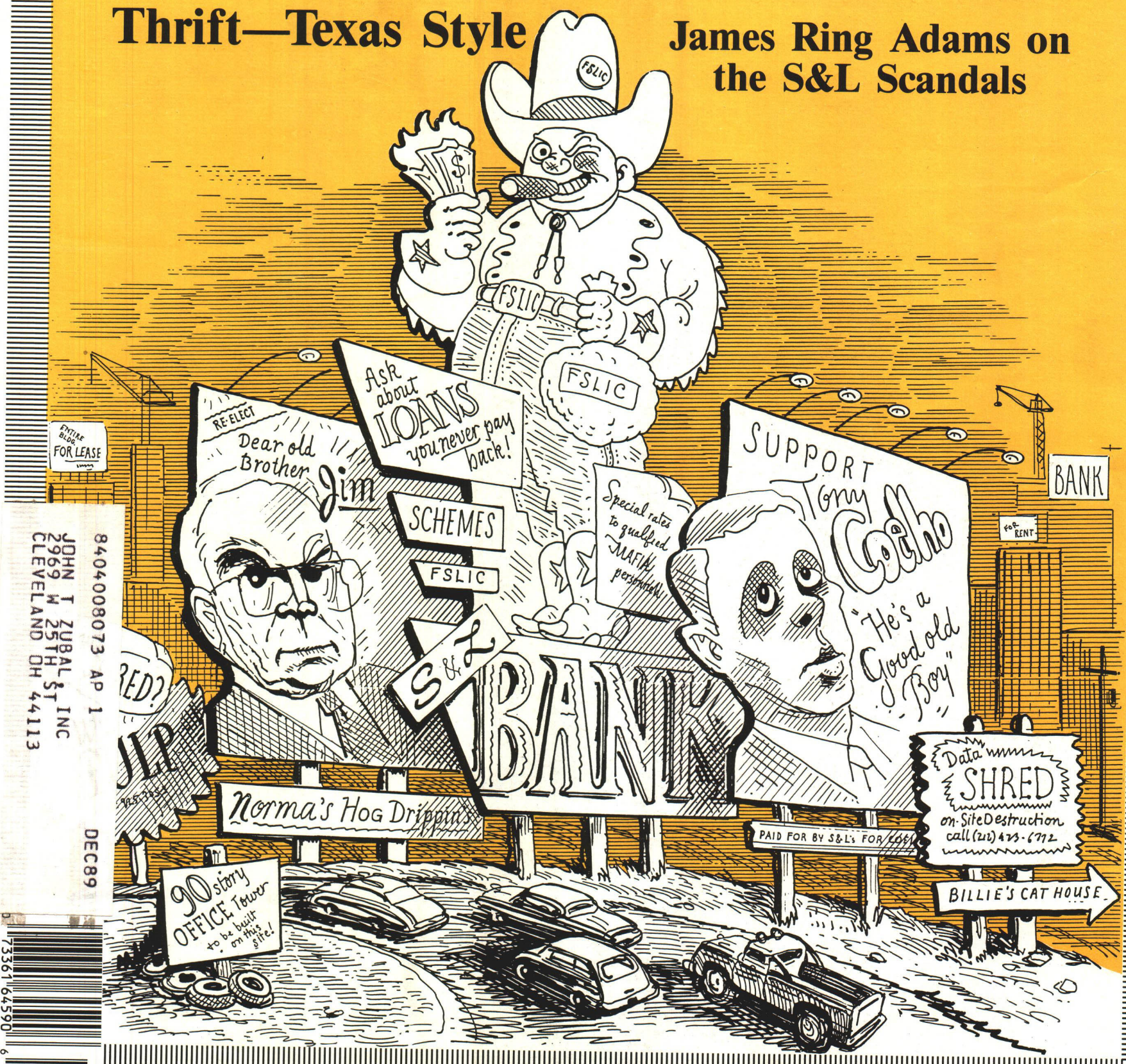

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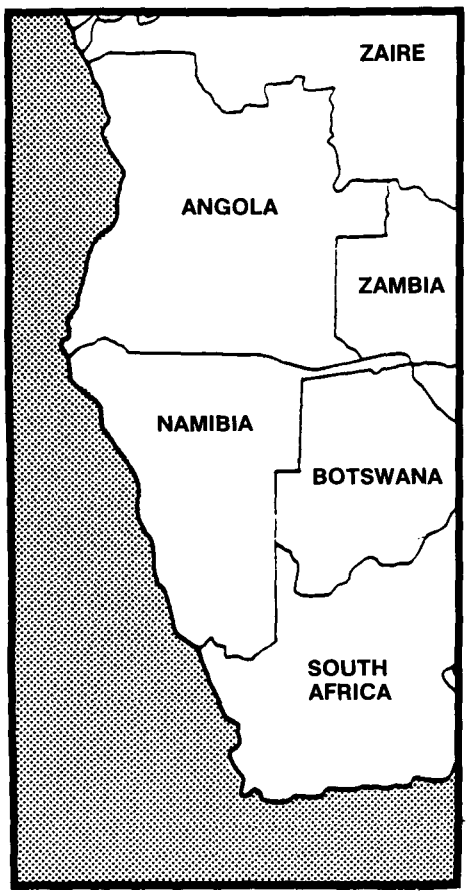


ON APRIL 1 WILL PRESIDENT BUSH SURRENDER TO SOVIET CONTROL TWO NATIONS MORE THAN 3 TIMES THE SIZE OF TEXAS?

The Reagan-Bush Administration has taken pride in claiming that since 1981, "not one square inch" of territory has been transferred from the Free World to the Soviet Union.

But, under the terms of Chester Crocker's "peace plan" for Namibia and Angola, George Bush may preside over the greatest transfer of real estate from the Free World to the Soviet Union since Stalin was handed Eastern Europe following World War II.

The goal of U.S. foreign policy should be to protect the nation's geostrategic vital interests and enhance liberty. The Crocker plan hurts America by encouraging the turnover of Namibia to Soviet-allied SWAPO terrorists, even as it undermines Jonas Savimbi's anti-Communist UNITA freedom fighters in Angola.

Namibia, governed since 1985 by a Black-majority Transitional Government of National Unity, has long been coveted by the Soviets for its natural resources and strategic position, north of South Africa, on the south Atlantic.

Under the terms of Andrew Young's 1978 UN Security Council Resolution 435, which is the framework of the Crocker scheme, elections are scheduled for Namibia on November 1, under United Nations auspices.

Because the UN has for years formally declared SWAPO to be "the only legitimate representative of the Southwest African people", and has furnished SWAPO with tens of millions of dollars in direct aid, it is impossible for the UN to serve as the "impartial" guarantor of Namibia's electoral process.

Because UN 435 requires the complete withdrawal of South Africa from Namibia and the introduction of UN troops from such "democratic" regimes as Yugoslavia, the pro-SWAPO message is strongly reinforced. In Africa, especially, it's dangerous not to vote with the apparent winner.

Namibia now has a pro-Western government which has abolished apartheid, encouraged free enterprise, enhanced political and civil liberties, and assured religious freedom. Private property rights have been respected and protected. **Will the people of Namibia be freer under a Marxist-Leninist SWAPO government — even if it is brought to power by supposedly "free" elections? Will American interests be more secure?**

By September 1, 1988, South Africa, under pressure from Crocker, had removed all of its troops from southern Angola, where they had helped defend Jonas Savimbi's liberated area from a multi-billion dollar Soviet war machine, which has included hundreds of advanced jet fighters, helicopter gunships, sophisticated radar, and more than 1,500 battle tanks.

Although the Crocker plan stipulates the withdrawal of 50,000 Cuban troops from Angola by July 1, 1991 — 27 months after the implementation of UN 435 begins in Namibia — it makes no provision for an estimated 2,500 Soviet military personnel, 2,500 North Koreans, 600 East Germans, plus other assorted Soviet-allied mercenaries and guerrillas. Moreover, UNITA intelligence maintains that there are 60,000, rather than 50,000 Cuban soldiers now in Angola, and worries that an estimated 15-20,000 more Cubans will remain as "citizens" of Angola.

Without logistical support from a friendly country proximate to his base in liberated southeastern Angola, the effectiveness of Savimbi's UNITA freedom fighters may be sharply eroded — and with it, pressure on the Soviet-allied Angola government to permit genuine national reconciliation with truly free elections.

It reveals much of the Crocker plan's anti-Savimbi bias to point out that **while 7,500 UN troops and 1,500 UN civilian representatives are being assigned to protect SWAPO's electoral concerns in Namibia, only 90 UN personnel are responsible for monitoring the withdrawal of 50,000 Cubans from Angola which is, itself, twice the size of Texas.**

Indeed, Brazilian General Pericles Ferriera Gomez, assigned to command the UN verification mission, told *The New York Times* (1/8/89): "For our mission, we do not need to know how many Cubans are now in the country . . . When they tell us there are no more troops, we will tell the United Nations that they have all gone." **General Gomez is prepared to "trust" the Communist Cubans and Angolans to monitor the withdrawal.**

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker brought his "peace plan" to consummation in the hours and days immediately after the November 8 election — assuring all parties that he spoke authoritatively for President-elect Bush, as well as for President Reagan. Congress was out of session, and the proposed terms were never debated by or even exposed to the American people.

Crocker's "land for peace" scenario may promote "stability" and thereby abet private commercial and banking interests, but it ill serves the prospects of liberty in either Angola or Namibia, even as it undermines the pro-U.S., democratic Black leaders in both countries.

George Bush's friends must remind him — before it's too late — that this is a bad deal for America. How are we helped by the weakening of Jonas Savimbi or the coming to power of SWAPO? Why are not **all** Communist troops in Angola to be withdrawn? Why must the South Africans be completely out of Namibia 20 months before the Cubans have left Angola? Why do we not insist that elections in Angola be held coincident with those in Namibia? Why don't we replace the UN with an impartial guarantor of Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola and fair elections in Namibia?

And **at a time of massive budget deficits, why must the American taxpayer foot so large a share of the bill for a UN role which is expected to cost much more than $600 million?**

In purely political terms, do George Bush and the GOP wish to face the 1992 elections bearing responsibility for the surrender of southern Africa to the Soviet Empire?

ACTION YOU CAN TAKE TO STOP CHESTER CROCKER'S SELLOUT

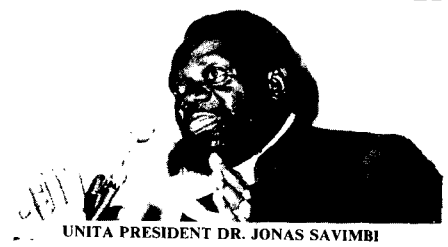
1) **Ask your U.S. Senators and Congressman to vote against using your taxes to underwrite the United Nations occupation of Namibia** and the concomitant isolation of Jonas Savimbi's UNITA freedom fighters in Angola. Why should American taxpayers foot the bill for a pro-SWAPO electoral process?

2) **Urge President Bush to instruct his UN ambassador to oppose implementation of UN 435 in Namibia** — All foreign military personnel should be withdrawn from Angola (as was originally demanded by the United States in 1981) and truly free elections should be scheduled in both Angola and Namibia.

3) **Oppose U.S. recognition of the illegal Angolan Communist puppet regime, and bar all direct and indirect U.S. aid for Angola until free elections** have been held. President Bush should veto all proposed funding to the Communists, whether through SADCC, the World Bank, the UN, the IMF, the African Development Bank, AID, or the U.S. Export-Import Bank.

4) With South African aid to Savimbi terminated on December 22 (and 7,500 UN troops soon to be interposed between South Africa and liberated Angola), the U.S. must step up its support for the anti-Communist Angola freedom fighters. **Urge your elected officials to escrow three years supply of high-tech military aid for UNITA,** lest their strength be undermined during the two and one half years before the Cubans are supposed to have completed their withdrawal. 15,000 Cuban troops have been *added* since negotiations began last year.

5) **Send a contribution today** to help pay for this ad and other activities to stop the sellout of southern Africa to Marxist-Leninist tyrants. Make your check payable to The Conservative Caucus/Action Fund, 450 Maple Avenue East, Vienna, Virginia 22180.



UNITA PRESIDENT DR. JONAS SAVIMBI

"How are we going to accept the people to destroy a victory that was within our reach . . . because last year they were defeated, the Russians and the Cubans were defeated. How it comes that this year we are going to be defeated on the negotiating table? We cannot accept it."

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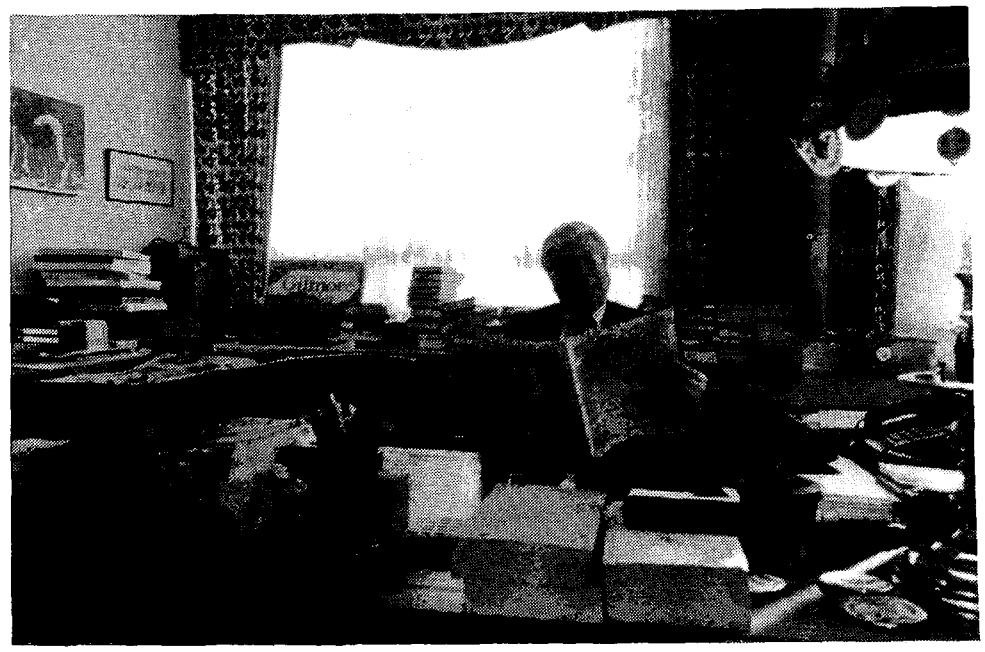

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The "New" PLO

Or: Can the Leopard Change Its Spots?

After more than 20 years of ostracism by most of the civilized world, Yasir Arafat, Chairman of the PLO, has finally uttered the "magic words" demanded by the U.S. It didn't come easy, and he didn't get it quite right. But it was good enough for Secretary of State George Schultz who, "the words" having been spoken, declared the willingness of the U.S. to talk with the PLO. One wonders whether that surprising opening will bring peace in the Middle East any closer to realization.

What are the facts?

■ Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, having wrung major concessions from Israel, promised that the U.S. would not deal with the PLO unless it fulfilled two conditions: (1) it would accept U.N. Resolutions 242 and 238; (2) it would recognize Israel's "existence". Congress added a third condition, namely that the PLO would renounce terrorism. Finally, after 20 years of obdurate resistance, Yasir Arafat, as spokesman for the PLO, did make those statements. Secretary Schultz decided therefore that the U.S. must establish contact with the PLO. Only a week earlier, the Secretary had refused Arafat a visa to enter the United States, because of his personal association with and personal responsibility for widespread terrorism all over the world.

■ What are the goals of the PLO, and is it likely that they have changed by the uttering of those three sentences? The PLO is a terror organization, created in 1964 by the Arab League. It has only one aim: the destruction of the State of Israel through force and violence. Any apparent deviation from this single-minded aim is a temporary tactical maneuver.

■ The basic charter of the PLO is the so-called "Palestinian National Covenant." Its main theme is that the State of Israel has no right whatever to exist. It states clearly that "Palestine...is an indivisible part of the Arab homeland," and that "the Arab-Palestinian people...reject all solutions that substitute for the total liberation of Palestine." Those PLO and Arab leaders who have from time to time ventured to propose a less inflexible approach have invariably paid with their lives for such deviation from PLO "orthodoxy".

■ The recent unilateral declaration by the PLO of a "Palestinian State with its capital in Jerusalem" on territory administered by and under control of Israel is an attempted step in that direction. The PLO was founded long before Israeli administration of Judea-Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip. Its avowed purpose was then, has always been and continues to be, not the establishment of a Palestinian state, but the destruction of Israel proper.

■ The PLO is the kingpin of international terror. It maintains a complex network of relations with all of the main terror organizations throughout the world. It has written a blood-spattered record of unrelenting terror. Some of their more "glorious" exploits: the mid-air explosion of a Swissair jetliner (47 dead); the attack on pilgrims and passengers at Ben-Gurion International Airport (26 dead, 76 wounded); the attack on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics (11 dead); attack on the Ma'alot school (24 dead, 62 wounded—mostly children); the hi-jacking of a passenger bus on the Haifa-Tel Aviv highway (35 dead, 80 wounded); the coordinated shoot-outs at the Rome and Vienna Airports (16 dead); and the murderous attack on the Istanbul Synagogue, in which 21 worshippers were killed.

■ In their attacks against Americans, the PLO hand is suspected in many of the kidnappings of U.S. hostages. American citizen Leon Klinghoffer was brutally killed in the PLO ship-jacking of the *Achille Lauro*. Some of the most brutal PLO attacks against Americans have been against U.S. diplomats. In the Sudan, in 1973, two American diplomats, Ambassador Cleo Noel and Chargé d'Affaires George C. Moore, were mercilessly machine gunned to death when blackmail demands were not met. *The Washington Post* reported on reliable evidence that Yasir Arafat personally was in charge of these executions. In 1976, Ambassador Francis Meloy, Jr. and Counselor Robert Waring were assassinated in Beirut, an attack widely believed to have been the work of the PFLP, a faction of the PLO. In March of 1988, a bomb-laden car was placed in front of the Hilton Hotel in Jerusalem in an attempt to assassinate Secretary George Shultz. There have been many bombings, hi-jackings, and terrorist attacks in virtually every Mid-East and European country, leaving countless dead and wounded. While the final verdict is not yet in, it is generally assumed by our government and by those who are investigating this terrible crime that one of the Palestinian factions patterned after and instructed by the PLO is responsible for the bombing of Pan Am flight #103, which cost over 270 mostly American lives.

Can the leopard change its spots? It does not seem likely. And it does not seem likely that the PLO, engaged in unrelenting terror since its creation 24 years ago, could suddenly become a factor for peace, just because of the intonation of a few "magic phrases". It is comforting to think that peace in the Middle East can be achieved by bestowing respectability on the PLO. But the only way to bring about peace int he Middle East is by direct negotiations between Israel and representatives of the residents of the administered territories, as agreed in the Camp David Accord: a period of autonomy, after which the final disposition and status of the territories will be decided by the people involved. The PLO cannot be a party to the peace process, because its charter calls for war and destruction and because terror and peace cannot exist together.

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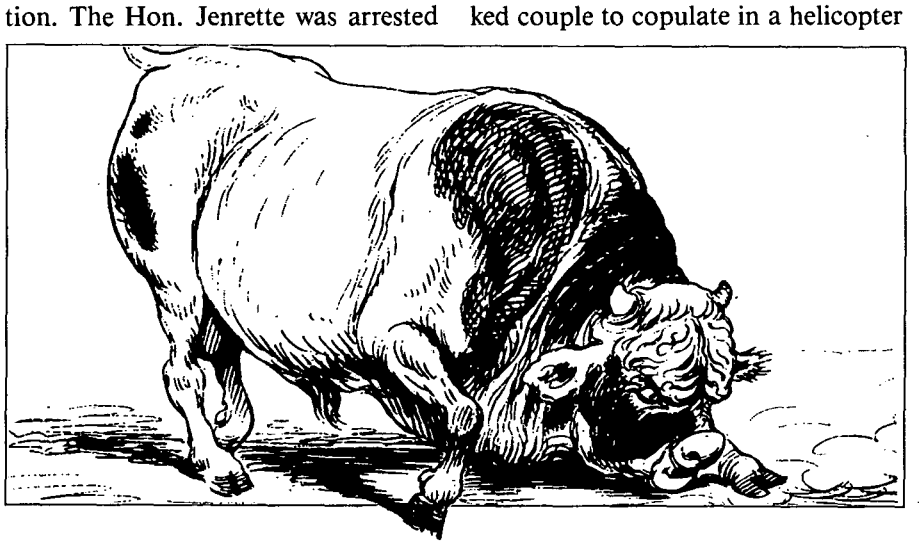
THE CONTINUING CRISIS

• And so January passes and with it the eight years of Goldwaterism as interpreted by Ronald Reagan. The interpreter was not very impressive we are told, usually by commentators who themselves are not particularly impressive—at least in any of the higher forms of intellection save for making erroneous pronunciamentos *en masse*. On foreign policy, national security, the economy, and social issues, Ronald Reagan's many critics have been stupendously wrong. That takes a kind of intelligence, namely the intelligence of the untutorable ass. Now we shall have the years of Reaganism as interpreted by George Bush. What may we expect? On the evidence of President Reagan's January 11 Farewell and President Bush's January 20 Inaugural we may expect mere prudence, civic responsibility, and civilized leadership from a civilized man. Political burlesque will remain confined to Capitol Hill and sneering ignorance to the sour critics—in other words, four more years.

• The puissance and malign influence of the animal rights militants continue to spread. In Austin, Texas, activists prevented the Skyline Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center from slaughtering the surviving turkeys from a trucking mishap and feeding them to Skyline's zonked patients. In Rockville, Maryland, activists responded to House of Chinese Gourmet's installation of a lobster tank by purchasing seven of the restaurant's live lobsters for $240 and flying them to a new home somewhere off the coast of Maine. And now the vegetarian cabal is insinuating that cattle flatulence is a significant cause of the dread "greenhouse effect." According to Professor Donald Johnson, a Colorado State University expert in animal nutrition who has spent twenty years studying bovine flatulence, the average hoofer raised for agricultural purposes emits 200 to 400 quarts of methane per day compared with the average person's daily discharge of about a liter. Thus the move toward the prohibition of red meat gains momentum. Yet let us look at the life in the barnyard from the point of view of the intelligent bovine. Imagine two thoughtful Herefords seated, say, in the faculty club at Stanford University, explicating the superiority of their existence over that of the assembled profs. Were they allowed to speak freely, doubtless these hoofed sophisticates would make the one-sided comparison. Here is the lowly human forced to fend for himself, erratically consuming foods of dubious nutritional merit, harassed by imbecilic laws and onerous levies, reaching maturity, and then decaying painfully and slowly into a humiliating senility and cruel death. And there is the vastly more intelligent life of the barnyard aristocrat, raised on the most nutritiously advanced diet, attended to at every turn by gifted agriculturists who genuinely care whether he lives or dies. After fastidious nurturing, he arrives at the peak of health and well-being, and then before the organs degenerate and beauty departs—*bop bop*—it's curtains and one's loved ones never see Uncle Elmer decompose into a pathetico. Such is the superbly rational life of beef cattle, and how could the Stanford profs deny its superiority? Most of them still extoll the New Deal, do they not, and every subsequent essay into social engineering?

• While on the subject of cattle flatulence, note that on January 3 the 101st Congress convened—and, notwithstanding all the honorable members' remonstrances against the federal deficit, promptly called for a 17 percent spending increase for Congress for fiscal 1990, including an increase from last year's $685,000 for the Hon. Jim Wright's "civic achievement" program to a munificent $3.3 million. For allegedly pilfering a much more modest sum, former South Carolina representative Mr. John W. Jenrette, Jr. has been charged with felonious acquisition. The Hon. Jenrette was arrested for lifting a pair of shoes from a Virginia department store and tampering with price tags, that being a time-honored congressional activity. Early in the month the Rev. Jim Bakker resurrected his television show complete with his grotesque wife sobbing incontinently (Quoth she, "Jim, I think this is probably the happiest day of my life") and a numinous explanation of his recent misfortunes. According to the Rev. Bakker, he was trying to break ground for his Crystal Palace Church at historic Heritage USA when Beelzebub got wind of it. "I believe that was the last straw for Satan," the euphonious Rev. Bakker averred. "I believe the devil was mad that something so beautiful was being built. . . . I believe the devil said, 'I have to smash Jim and Tammy Bakker.' " Here is the po' whites' J. J. Jackson.

• The redoubtable Islamic Republic News Agency reported that Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, D.D., has counseled President Mikhail Gorbachev, D.E., "to seriously study and research Islam" as an ideological replacement for Communism, which according to the Rev. Khomeini's researches is "dead." In Lebanon, hundreds of Lebanese died of gunshot wounds after opposing factions of Shiite Moslems renewed their lively dispute regarding the true burial site of Muhammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya's undergarments and who gets the related cotton candy concession. In international water sports, two F-14s from the USS *John F. Kennedy* blasted two Libyan MiGs into the Mediterranean. The Chief Rabbi of Tiberias revoked the Tiberias Club Hotel's kosher food license upon being informed that the hotel allowed a naked couple to copulate in a helicopter as it hovered inches above the hotel swimming pool. Mayor Yigal Bibi of Tiberias added an acrimonious tone to the proceedings, asserting that "the directors of the hotel are completely nuts."



• President Reagan's last budget was submitted on January 9, and notwithstanding eight years of putative miserliness the budget is approximately twice as portly as the budget Congress enacted in Mr. Reagan's first year in office, 1981. Another mercy-killing is in the news. In Sun City, Arizona, Mr. Edward Ward, who had called police to his home claiming that his wife had committed suicide, dropped that suicide claim when police noted that Mrs. Ward had been struck eight times with a blunt instrument behind the head. Now Mr. Ward contends that Mrs. Ward's death came about during Mr. Ward's repeated attempts at euthanasia, and he has been indicted on one count of first-degree murder. In Sri Lanka, where a peace-keeping force from the Indian army has lost more than 600 soldiers to land mines secreted by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, 1,000 goats are being deployed to explode mines and an Indian army spokesman is bragging that "it was better for the goats to die for the cause of peace than be killed for the table." Gandhi lives!

• In New York City, Mr. Dennis Davis's beautiful rendition of the old Billie Holiday song "God Bless the Child" set off a mêlée on a 9:00 a.m. subway train when it awakened Mr. J'min Porcha, who was sleeping late after a hectic night and did not want to be disturbed. Mr. Davis was charged with attempted murder. Despite the decidedly unsavory beard that he affects, New York State assemblyman Mr. Dov Hikind is going through with his demand that the assembly investigate the use of tax dollars to finance an art journal carrying nude photos of children. After repeated nightmares that her mother, who had been missing for over three years, "was in a place where she couldn't move," 20-year-old Miss Kelly Tyburski of Plymouth, Michigan, took the logical course of prying the lock off the family freezer where she found her mother's battered body, thus occasioning the arrest of Miss Tyburski's father, dean of students

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at Detroit's very strict Mackenzie High School.

• In Lagos, Nigeria, Justice Commissioner Betu Mamuno unexpectedly discovered twenty Moslems who had been locked away in the Yola calaboose five years ago pending indictment for rioting. Officials had apparently forgotten about them, but life in the Yola prison could not be any worse than life in metropolitan Yola. Mr. Robert Lekachman, a left-wing economist who could always be relied upon for elegant commentary even in conservative journals such as this one, died. He was 68. Mrs. Pilar Franco, sister of the late Spanish reformer General Francisco Franco, died. She was 94. Mr. Salvador Dali, dauber of the unconscious, died. It was 84. And on January 7, Japan's Emperor Hirohito reached room temperature. He was 87, and demand for Taiwan's white chrysanthemums, the flowers used in the official mourning celebrations, was so colossal that Taiwanese growers could only meet 30 percent of their orders.

• There has been another report of a policeman expelling gas in a discourteous manner while on duty. Last month this column reported that three Miami policemen were reprimanded for covering up one officer's flatus into a police radio. Now Los Angeles Police Commander William Booth has suspended patrolman Juan Gomez for breaking wind in front of two handcuffed prisoners after intoning, "Check this out." Colonel Muammar Qaddafi has notified French television viewers that Shakespeare's works were actually written by an Arab, Sheik Zbere. And there is evidence that the author Alexander Cockburn is at work on a scholarly revision of his mentor, Dr. Marx. There has been an outbreak of head lice in the research rooms of the Library of Congress. *—RET*

CORRESPONDENCE

Correction

Due to an editing error and a case of bad penmanship, Richard Gilder's company was misidentified in the text accompanying our display of Washington Club photographs (taken by Peter Kolk) in our February issue. Mr. Gilder is affiliated with Gilder, Gagnon and Company in New York City. Our apologies.

Keynes and the Congressman

It is a pity that Congressman Stephen Solarz decided to use your invitation to a bit of bipartisan Christmas cheer as a platform for a rather perverted polemic ("Books for Christmas," *TAS*, December 1988). The idea of comparing the freely contracted debt obligations of today's Third World countries to the reparations exacted on Germany after the First World War is, in itself, patently absurd. But his use of Keynes's *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* to support his ill-founded analogy makes it worse. The congressman should be made aware that Keynes's holy rhetoric is not without its share of critics. Modern British historians Paul Johnson and Corelli Barnett both question the validity of Keynes's judgments. Barnett describes Keynes's influence on the interwar period as "immense, far-reaching and catastrophic" and concludes that Keynes's basic tenet is "sentimental nonsense," particularly when one considers the terms Germany demanded of France (Frankfurt, 1871) and Russia (Brest-Litovsk, 1918). I've always wondered how Keynes's book was taken seriously as an objective account when he admitted to Virginia Woolf, regarding the German spokesman at Versailles, Melchior, "I was rather in love with him," and described his own prime minister as "half-human," one British admiral as "a most surly and ignorant sea-dog," and the Supreme Allied Commander Foch and his spokesman Weygand as, respectively, "narrow and impervious . . . a peasant," and "his attendant sprite." It should have been clear all along that the guilt-ridden conscience of the Bloomsbury crowd was one step away from treachery (remember Strachey's famous reply to a tribunal's query, "What would you do if you saw a German officer attempting to rape your sister?"—"I should try to interpose my own body"). And Raymond Aron, in his preface to the French edition of Etienne Mantoux's attack on Keynes, *The Carthaginian Peace*, openly declares that we should reject Keynes, and re-read Jacques Bainville. The latter predicted twenty years before the fact that Germany would inevitably be tempted to "fish in the troubled waters" of Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Foch, too, had remarked in 1919, "This is not a peace. It is an armistice for twenty years." Which side has been proved correct—the Bloomsbury guilt trip, or the sober French?

—Russell Desmond
New Orleans, Louisiana

Brit Bashes Back

In your issue of November 1988 . . . George Szamuely [in "The Brits Boot Hong Kong"] says: "For the first time in history, a ruling elite will, without even a show of struggle, relinquish its dominance over society in favor of Communists."

The Hong Kong treaty of 1897 has been accepted as valid since its signing. It has never been questioned in international law. But assuming the British were base and foolish enough to unilaterally abrogate the treaty, what then? Has Mr. Szamuely *been* to Hong Kong? Has he any idea of the defensive possibility if China decided to attack?

Let us remember Vietnam. It is true America forced its poor and illiterate to fight its battles there, and it is also true that, heirs to a great tradition, those men fought well though reviled and sneered at by those whose way of life they were defending. But they lost to a tiny far-off country.

Mr. Szamuely wants the British to take on China, does he, and a bloody fool he is.

The Brit bashing in *TAS* (I am a long-time subscriber) does get tiresome, you know, and at least you could deal in facts, not malice.

—Lt. Col. A. R. Wythe Walberswick, Southwold Suffolk, England

Globaloney in Annandale

It may well be, as David Brock suggests, that Minnesota students are under siege by "committed political cadres accomplishing their task through emotional manipulation, indoctrination, and exploitation of school children" ("Selling Globaloney in the Schools," *TAS*, December 1988). But surely the editors of *TAS*, Mr. Brock, and Mrs. Katherine Kerston (the "concerned Minnesota parent, who provided much of the documentation for this article") are not so naive as to expect anything else. The left, if nothing else, is tireless in its pursuit of young minds. It is well organized, well connected, and well financed. Its adherents actually *work* at their cause. And in Minnesota's schools, as Mr. Brock so sullenly points out, their efforts are paying dividends.

But it does no good to whine about it. One expects, or should expect, committed ideologues to pursue their various agendas with whatever force and fervor they can muster. That's politics; and it is honorable, if occasionally dirty, work. . . . If Mrs. Kerston and Mr. Brock wish to stop the leftist indoctrination that they perceive in Minnesota's schools, they'd do much better to emulate the tactics of their opponents than to complain to each other about those bad people in Minnesota. . . .

I grew increasingly uncomfortable as I read Mr. Brock's lengthy diatribe; but it wasn't until I reached the very end that I figured out why. In the second paragraph from the end he writes:

> The junior and senior classes at Annandale High School in Annandale, Minnesota, recently spent a day in a discussion of Central America. Among the speakers were Anne Winkler, mentioned above; Mary Turck, a CARC board member; Dick Bancroft, a member of CARC's speakers' bureau; and Jim Shapiro, a member of CISPES. At CARC's suggestion, the Annandale students prepared themselves for the event by reading Faith Adams's tendentious state-sponsored Central America "study guide."

Well, yes. Sort of. I'm certain it was a simple oversight by the author, but Mr. Brock's piece didn't mention that Mrs. Kerston was also one of the speakers at that discussion. She was, in fact, one of the two main presenters. It's true that all of those who were mentioned by Mr. Brock did appear at that discussion. And it's true that the students were given Faith Adams's tendentious state-sponsored study guide. But it's also true that there's more to the story than that.

Annandale High School, located in the center of a tiny town in central Minnesota, about one hour northwest of the Twin Cities, is particularly fortunate to have a senior high social studies teacher named Beth Sviggum. She is one of those all-too-rare teachers whose competence, skill, dedication to her profession, and commitment to her students are an actual inspiration to many of us who live here. She was the organizer of the day-long discussion of Central America last February.

After reading Mr. Brock's piece, I contacted Miss Sviggum to ask her a few questions about what actually happened. She told me that her goal in organizing the event was to present to her students a perspective on Central America that was "balanced, fair, and as objective as possible." Most Annandale students—indeed, most adults in this nation—couldn't find Nicaragua on a map, let alone explain what the U.S. interests there might be. Most have, at best, only the dimmest notion of the ideological struggles that divide earnest people in Central America, and here in the U.S. What this young social studies teacher hoped to accomplish through her Central America discussion was simply to give her students some rough idea, some small notion, of the world beyond the Annandale

(continued on page 47)

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EDITORIALS

STUPEFYING IMBECILES

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Washington

One of the many unpardonable offenses that one can commit in this enlightened and progressive city is to quote the utterances of one's fellow journalists after a sufficient amount of time has elapsed to expose their flumdiddle in all its stupefying imbecility. The colleagues do not like to be reminded. Yet with regard to the many portentous pronouncements they have handed down on Ronald Reagan's tenancy in the White House, surely the pundits will not mind being quoted. They have been reiterating their charges against him with unusual regularity for eight years.

In fact, two of the few constants of the Reagan years have been spreading peace and prosperity accompanied by the pundits' judgments that Ronald Reagan was imperiling peace and prosperity. Now, as the most popular President since FDR leaves office, the majority of pundits in print and across the airwaves drone on, sounding pretty much as they did in 1980 when they pronounced Reagan injurious to civilization.

Off to his retirement the oldest President in American history goes, and columnist Pete Hamill once again sounds the shocking litany: "Now we will have to pay for Reagan's party," he moans in the *New York Post*, "learning to live as the world's leading debtor nation. We will have to acknowledge the waning of our economic power, as the true engine [sic] of the world shifts to Tokyo and the rest of Asia. The mayhem of the drug gangs will get worse. The ghastly army of the homeless will recruit many more troops. And Reagan will live out his days, surrounded by the California rich, basking smugly in public affection. . . . This is some country." Earlier in this column Dr. Hamill relied on another line that has been a stock canard with his kind for eight years: "To the very end, Reagan was only an actor, a man schooled in the craft of counterfeiting eloquence, emotion and toughness." Well, if you can charge a man who so valiantly endured a bullet to the chest with "counterfeiting toughness," you can utter any absurdity. This the Reagan-haters have been doing through the tedious years as they grow ever more honored, more repetitive, and apparently more gaga.

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

In its 1980 endorsement of Jimmy Carter the *New York Times* wrote: "What concerns us about Ronald Reagan is the depth and texture of his political values. . . . He seems genuinely to believe that the vain pursuit of arms superiority will bring the Russians begging to the bargaining table." *Times* columnist Tom Wicker warned of a Reagan Administration "that threatens a heightened arms race and a retreat from hard-won liberal achievements." Anthony Lewis's contribution to the monotony was that Reagan "seems likely to accelerate the nuclear arms race. He might strain the relationship with Peking to the point where the Chinese would reconsider their attitude toward the Soviets."

By the fall of 1981 the chorus had gained another somber theme or two. Columnist John B. Oakes explained, again in the *Times*, that Reagan was presiding over a "harshly reactionary revolution" that "substituted a mindless militarism for a foreign policy." Much of Reagan's arms budget "will be dissipated in the self-defeating spiral of an open-ended nuclear-arms race that poses a greater threat to our internal and external security than all the Communist propaganda . . . from Moscow." In 1982, at the threshold of one of America's longest, most comprehensive periods of prosperity, Wicker pronounced the Reagan tax reduction bill "a solid, ringing failure." As to its capacity to produce recovery, "it's self-evident that it hasn't and won't." Two months earlier Lewis was groaning, "If the economic folly of the Reagan Administration goes on . . . the price will be terrible," and he approvingly repeated Kevin Phillips's prediction that "Reaganism will be followed by authoritarian right-wing populism." Carl Rowan concluded that the Reagan Administration was "destroying" hope "for millions of poor and middle-class Americans."

With the October 1987 stock collapse, the chorus ignored the essential soundness of the economy and sang, "The binge is over"—economist Robert Reich; "The age of Reagan is over now, no matter what happens"—Dr. Lewis; "This debacle marks the last chapter of Reaganomics"—John Kenneth Galbraith. In its summation of the Reagan presidency *Time* magazine now runs the headline "Going Home a Winner," but the subheadline is "Reagan's bread-and-circuses strategy will mar his place in history." And what of the pundits' place in history? □

NBC'S "YESTERDAY" SHOW

As an assiduous viewer of the Republic's three major morning talk shows I should like to tender a public-spirited suggestion to the producers and directors of NBC's "Today" show. The program's name no longer conveys the character of the show or the reason that viewers turn to it. Viewers do not watch it to be informed of events today but to be informed of the way things were yesterday. In the interest of accuracy I suggest that NBC rechristen this swell assemblage of all the sentiments, the prejudices, the bugaboos of the 1970s (occasionally the 1960s too) "Yesterday" with Bryant Gumbel and Jane Pauley.

I do not make this suggestion in pursuit of snickers or rude gestures at NBC's expense. The "Yesterday" show is, I know, a success. Every morning there are a million or so yuppies out there gobbling vitamins, sipping vegetable juices, prayerfully spooning their way through mounds of disgusting bran, and vastly enjoying NBC's stroll down memory lane, where Presidents are always under imminent threat of impeachment and untrustworthy corporations are subverting noble Third World showcases of the socialist political science. A decade ago today's yuppies had only their idealism, their herbal soaps, their earth shoes, a loony prof as a guru, and their bumper stickers. Now they have the Reagan prosperity, their BMWs, and their bumper stickers. They have no new literature, no new wisdom, only their fat paychecks. They are the only malcontents in the history of the West to have learned nothing from their dalliances with totalitarianism and failed Utopia. Those malcontents who in the 1930s returned from abroad extolling the virtues of Stalin, Mussolini, and even Hitler occasionally confessed quite eloquently to their error. Consider Muggeridge, Orwell, or Koestler. Apart from Peter Collier and David

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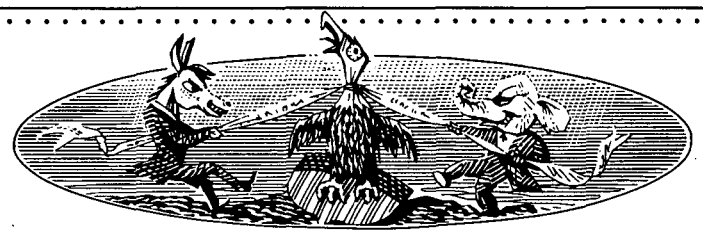
Horowitz, no American admirers of Castro, Ho Chi Minh, or Mao have in the 1980s admitted to being duped. Instead most of yesteryear's *enragés* have now gentled into the middle-class amenities that Reaganism provides in such abundance and kept their old prejudices intact and impenetrable. A bumper sticker finely tuned to their sentimental weirdness might be "A Brain is a Beautiful Vegetable."

Certainly the brains that govern the "Yesterday" show are beautiful vegetables. There one would never know that for the past six years American GNP has grown annually at 4 percent, that today's GNP is approximately 26 percent higher than it was when Ronald Reagan arrived in office, that without a nuclear freeze or any of the other quack panaceas of the left Moscow is again cordial toward Washington, dismantling missiles and withdrawing from countries it overran in the days of the Carter grin. Watching the "Yesterday" show is like watching the "Today" show, say, in the spring of 1975—except for one thing: recent history has demonstrated that radicalism's infantile sneer at the American way of life is no improvement on reality.

The other morning, when I tuned in, one of "Yesterday's" features was a piece on Texas whence, we were told, so many powers in the Bush Administration will be drawn. And who was our guide to George Bush's Texas? Why, Jim Hightower, Texas's "populist" agriculture commissioner who gained fleeting fame for being one of the most florid abominators of George Bush at last summer's ill-starred Democratic Convention. Mr. Hightower boasts of his left-wing rigorism by saying things like "the only things in the middle of the road are yellow lines and dead armadillos." The Texas that Mr. Hightower showed us was more like the dustbowl of the 1930s than the Texas George Bush and his people come from. Once again NBC was not telling us about today but rather about yesterday. Mr. Hightower's explication of Texas was one unrelieved tour of misery and penury: farms foreclosed on, huge office buildings vacant, a grizzled good old boy wheezing something about George Bush's being a wimp.

"Yesterday's" visit to Texas was a fantasy and it ended with Mr. Hightower's warning that George Bush had better "get in touch" with the people. His urgency was somewhat startling, considering that only two months ago 53 percent of the electorate were for Bush, and polls indicate that an even higher percentage of nonvoters supported him. When will "Yesterday" cover the 1980s? My guess is never. Apparently its producers are attempting to create a museum of the 1960s-1970s. It is a nostalgia broadcast. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



DEFENSELESS COWARDS

by Tom Bethell

On September 30, 1988, in a *Wall Street Journal* editorial entitled "Curious Chemistry," Air Force Chief of Staff Larry D. Welch was quoted as saying in an interview with the paper's editors: "As soon as the President announced his vision of a Strategic Defense Initiative, there was an immediate opposition to the idea. It wasn't an argument over whether SDI was technically feasible. It was an argument over whether defense is destabilizing, and I think that is an absolutely nonsensical argument. We have no defense system worthy of the name. This tremendous opposition to introducing a defensive element to the U.S. deterrent strategy has to be one of the most mysterious pieces of political chemistry we've seen."

The newspaper then editorially noted that the Reagan Administration had compromised with the "curious" sentiment that defensive missiles are immoral and offensive ones are not, thereby "perhaps compromising our national security as well." This may have been the strongest criticism directed at Reagan in his eight years in office, but no one seemed to notice it.

I write on Inauguration Day, amidst a general sense of euphoria in Washington. Bipartisan consensus has once again been restored to foreign policy, we are told. "The Establishment is back," a *Washington Post* editor wrote a few days ago, "not just the individuals and the pedigrees, but the state of mind." Which is what I am worried about, frankly. We are supposed to feel reassured that Andover, St. Marks, Yale, and Princeton are back in the saddle. And we are supposed to derive comfort because the left-wing senator from Maine and new Senate Majority Leader, George Mitchell, is "trying very hard to establish from our side an atmosphere of cooperation and bipartisanship."

David Ignatius, the editor of the *Washington Post*'s Outlook section, noted that Secretary of State James A. Baker III was dutifully consulting with his predecessors, in a way that was reminiscent of "the best and the brightest" at the outset of John F. Kennedy's Administration. Lurking beneath the comparison with the ironically named "best and brightest," of course, was an implicit prediction of disaster ahead: Kennedy's highly qualified Ivy Leaguers soon strolled into the quagmire of Vietnam. Does a comparable fate await President Bush's team, so many of whom come from a comparable background?

What is disturbing about the present situation is not so much that the country is undefended as that it is undefended because we are afraid to defend ourselves. In an article in *Human Events* last summer, Jon Utley, a friend of mine who lives in the Washington area, put the matter somewhat differently, but he too is disturbed. "The studied absence of any civil defense is a sin of pride of Biblical proportions. Are many Americans so arrogant as to consider a nuclear attack on us as meaning the end of civilization?"

By all accounts the Soviet economy is collapsing; Soviet troops are retreating from Afghanistan (they are all supposed to be out by February 15), having been beaten back by ragtag brigades of free-lance mujahedeen (armed, however, with the willingness to die for their cause). Still, the Soviet strategic arsenal is intact and there can be little doubt that the U.S. leadership is afraid to construct an air-defense against it. And we will not even think about civil defense for the American people.

Has anything comparable to this ever happened before—a great power so fearful of its collapsing adversary that it cannot muster the will to defend itself? "The sad fact is that few nations in history have adopted such a 'strategy' as that of the United States, purposely leaving its citizens as unprotected hostages to attack," Utley wrote. Petr Beckmann, the publisher of *Access to Energy* in Boulder, Colorado, believes that the present lack of will among the American leadership class is more grave than it was in Neville Chamberlain's England of fifty years ago.

The predicament we are in is disguised by the existence of the misnamed Department of Defense, which spends $300 billion annually, none of it on defense. The very large sums of money that the department disposes of every year amount largely to a form of domestic pork barrel, the money going to salaries, pensions, the maintenance of many obsolete, World War II-era bases, the subsidy of foreign governments and taxpayers, and (to be fair) the procurement of offensive weapons.

The Pentagon spends nothing on civil defense, that task having been delegated to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which is housed on the campus of what was once a Catholic college in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Its budget is about $150 million a year, part of which is dedicated to earthquake preparedness. One day recently I drove out to Emmitsburg to hear two talks on civil defense, one given by Arthur Robinson, who publishes a pro-civil defense newsletter entitled "Fighting Chance" (P.O. Box 1279, Cave Junction, Oregon, 97523). The other speaker was Justin Frank, the president of the Washington chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility. He said that when Jim-

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my Carter began his "defense buildup" in 1978 it "frightened a group of physicians," the best-known of whom was the left-wing pediatrician Helen Caldicott. Dr. Frank said he joined the group about eight years ago, "the day after my son was born." He said the "goal" of PSR was "to prevent nuclear war," and its "values" were enshrined in the belief that life is "precious" and "vulnerable."

Justin Frank had one and only one argument against civil defense, and it is the same as the argument used against strategic defense: whether civil or strategic, defense makes nuclear war more "thinkable," because if "one side" has it, the temptation to launch a first strike could be irresistible; he who has defense can strike first and win.

This is the argument that Air Force Chief of Staff Welch calls "nonsensical." Imagine the reaction if someone in Neville Chamberlain's Britain had denigrated the British development of radar, on the grounds that that would make war with Hitler more "thinkable." The makes-war-more-thinkable argument contains the following hidden assumption: "We" are no better than "they." There are simply "two sides," both alike threatened by the awful technology of nuclear weapons. But this is a lie and the American willingness to be bullied into silence by it is disturbing. "We" should not accept this slanderous imputation of bad faith and of evil, aggressive intentions, awaiting only the security of civil and strategic defenses before they can be carried out in the form of a first strike.

The Soviets meanwhile are building both strategic and civil defenses. By contrast, we would do well to suspect *their* motives, because of the yawning gap between their form of totalitarian government, imprisoning and subjugating all those who live under it, and our democracy. But the Physicians for Social Responsibility do not protest the Soviet programs of civil and strategic defense. They know about it, but don't mind. And this can lead only to the following conclusion: they believe that if the U.S. is defended, it is more likely to attack the Soviet Union than a defended Soviet Union is likely to attack an undefended U.S.

Notice also the following: all of PSR's stated goals ("to prevent nuclear war," "to eliminate the use of weapons of mass destruction," etc.) could be attained by a U.S. surrender. No one ever points out that those who argue that "defense" is destabilizing tend to be in sympathy with the socialist ideology that has legitimized the exercise of power in only *one* of the "two sides." May we not conclude that the true goal of PSR and of all organizations that deplore a defended U.S. is the spread of international socialism? Helen Caldicott may have embarrassed her PSR colleagues, but only by her candor, when in 1988 she compared Mikhail Gorbachev to Jesus Christ. If British opponents of radar in 1938 had turned out to be Nazi sympathizers, would they not have been regarded with a certain suspicion, to put it mildly? But in the U.S. today it is the greatest of all political taboos to cast suspicion on the designs of those who really do sympathize with the ideology that has legitimized Soviet rule for seventy years.

Arthur Robinson is a biochemist, who used to work with Linus Pauling until the two split irrevocably ten years ago. Robinson is now one of the leading U.S. experts on civil defense, and he has much to say on the subject. Perhaps his most important point directly contradicts PSR's makes-war-more-thinkable argument. In fact, says Robinson, civil defense makes war less thinkable because if "one side" knows "the other side" has its population in shelters, then it knows that tens of millions of people will survive a nuclear attack. And the prospect of confronting these survivors deters the attack. For this reason, Robinson believes, the Soviet Union is now most

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unlikely to attack China, which has large civil defense shelters under its major cities. As Jon Utley wrote in *Human Events*: "The great irony is that if Americans had shelters, an enemy would have infinitely less incentive to launch a surprise attack. Just by their existence they would probably never be needed. But without them America makes itself more and more inviting to a first strike."

In its latest (1988) edition of *Soviet Military Power*, the Pentagon devotes a few pages to Soviet civil defense. "For 40 years, the Soviet Union has had a vast program underway to ensure the survival of the leadership in the event of nuclear war," the document reports. "This program is designed solely to protect the senior Soviet leadership from the effect of nuclear war. These deep underground facilities today are, in some cases, hundreds of meters deep and can accommodate thousands of people."

Another speaker at the FEMA conference was Leon Goure, a Soviet émigré who is perhaps the leading expert in the U.S. on Soviet civil defense. He has an elaborate slide show to prove that the word "solely" in the above paragraph is incorrect. Increasingly, the Soviet civil defense program can protect ordinary Soviet citizens as well as party members. *Soviet Military Power* does go on to say:

> The secrecy of the program and the uncertainty about the extent and nature of these facilities are major causes for concern. The deep undergound program, which rivals Soviet offensive strategic weapons both in scale and level of commitment, remained undiminished even as the Soviets agreed to limit their defenses against ballistic missiles in the ABM Treaty. . . .
>
> The deep underground facilities beneath the city of Moscow are directly associated with the main centers of state power. They provide the leaders of the various organizations of state control the opportunity to move from their peacetime offices through concealed entryways down to protective quarters below the city, in some cases hundreds of meters down. Once there the Politburo, the Central Committee, the Ministry of Defense, the KGB and the apparatuses of the many other state ministries can remain sheltered while the USSR converts to a wartime posture. The fruits of this 40-year construction program now offer the Soviet wartime leadership the option of remaining beneath Moscow, or, at some point, boarding secret subway lines connecting these deep underground facilities. From there the Soviets can make their way to nearby underground complexes outside Moscow where they plan to survive nuclear strikes and to direct the war effort.

In response, Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci called in September 1988 for the development of earth-penetrating nuclear weapons designed to burrow down into these shelters. But is this the way to go? Should we not be developing strategic defense, and civil defense? If the Defense Department does not soon avail itself of the latest available technology, which is to say technology with a real defensive capability, then the country will be imperiled, if it is not already.

The collapse of socialist economies makes the Soviets more dangerous, not less so. Their leaders must now know that they are doomed to fall further and further behind. As for their strategic arsenal, they must fairly soon either "use it or lose it," as Arthur Robinson put it to me. A more likely scenario, he added, was a contrived international crisis, whereupon the Soviet leaders would order their population into shelters—and call upon ours to surrender. Then what would we do?

As I left the Emmitsburg conference, I recalled a remark made by a FEMA employee from the audience during the question period after Arthur Robinson and Justin Frank had spoken. I wrote it down: "A group of us laughed ourselves sick in the pub last night, because we're supposed to be preparing for nuclear war, and we're utilizing that money to deal with hazardous-materials incidents and to deal with earthquakes. And the general public doesn't know that." □

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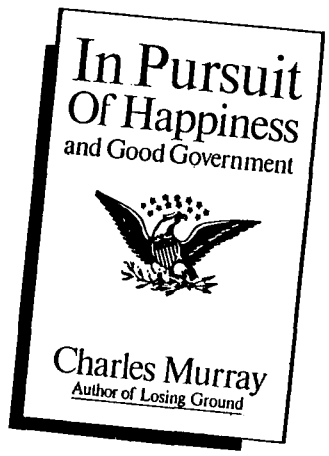

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Robert D. Novak

THE UNFINISHED REAGAN AGENDA

To meet conservative expectations, President Bush will have to pay more than lip service to such issues as government spending, the contras, and abortion.

While marching methodically toward the Republican presidential nomination in the summer of 1987, George Bush was answering tame, predictable questions in a session with well-mannered party faithful at Greenville, South Carolina, when an elderly gentleman rose and asked: "What do you consider the unfinished Reagan agenda?"

The pause by the Vice President signaled that this was a question he had not heard at previous "Ask George Bush" meetings. After another pause, he absent-mindedly gave the sort of reply one could expect from any self-respecting Democrat by listing the "twin deficits"—trade and budget. Noting wife Barbara seated in the front row, he dutifully mentioned her pet cause of combating "the horrors of illiteracy."

Only then did Bush start to exhibit some zest for agenda-finishing. He suggested the federal government's attention to "outdoor recreation" was long overdue. But reacting as though he feared that agenda item was a little too frivolous, he soberly listed the reduction of international tensions.

Unmistakably, the governmental task that the enthusiastic fisherman, bird-shooter, power-boater, and horseshoes-player really warmed to was "outdoor recreation." That may seem disconnected from the real Reagan agenda, but it suggests the problems that will face the first third-term succession by the same party since the Roosevelt-Truman Era.

If the unfinished "Reagan agenda" means leftover items from an administration that in its last two years had taken on characteristics of previous post–World War II Republican regimes, Bush's answer in Greenville was not out of the ordinary. His call for recreational spending may have been somewhat idiosyncratic, but his harping on the twin deficits, education, and peace fit the unadventurous mood of Ronald Reagan's last two years.

If the unfinished agenda refers to the Reagan Revolution, however, the new Republican leader had lost sight of his followers. On that summer evening in South Carolina, he said nothing about what concerned the conservative rank-and-file: abortion, contras, Ollie North, Robert Bork (then facing confirmation). Nor as the President-elect has he dealt with those incendiary subjects.

Yet Bush is not alone. Republican politicians, reckoning that one revolution is more than enough for one decade, want stability. Even consciously conservative Republican leaders are not at all sure about the unfinished agenda. They act as though the great battles have been won—a restoration of the economy and American prestige in the world. Now they feel a strictly defensive holding action is necessary. They can hardly criticize the new President when they cannot enunciate the agenda themselves.

That does not speak for the conservative rank-and-file, however. "There is an unfinished agenda, and there is a lot of popular steam behind it," says Jeffrey Bell, a long-time soldier in the conservative movement who has carefully studied the tension between elite and populist opinion flows. "The problem is that prominent conservative leaders, almost without exception, don't agree with the agenda of the conservative movement's rank and file."

William Bennett, Bush's unexpected choice as drug czar, lists these specific agenda items: educational choice, support for the contras, and opposition to abortion. His broader goals: "fighting for freedom in the world and making American institutions more responsive to the American people rather than being run by bureaucrats and elites."

The difficulty in mobilizing the Bush Administration behind this last Bennett goal becomes obvious when the nascent Bush Administration is examined. Even more than the last stage of the Reagan Administration, it is dominated by conservative elitists (Baker at State, Brady at Treasury, Mosbacher at Commerce, the President himself) and bureaucrats (Scowcroft at NSC, Thornburgh at Justice, Cavazos at Education, Dole at Labor, Yeutter at Agriculture).

Nor does the new regime enjoy either the determination of Ronald Reagan or the simplicity of his two overriding goals: reduction of tax rates and the restoration of military power. This was the core of the Reagan Revolution, and here there is no sense of an unfinished agenda but rather an attempt to prevent a liberal counterreformation.

There is no obvious sequel to Reagan's economic accomplishments. Arthur Laffer, the supply-side pioneer, says all that remains to be done in taxation is a moratorium for evaders (an idea whose time clearly has not yet come). Supply-side enthusiasm for a gold-convertible dollar has flagged in view of how effective less sweeping monetary reforms have proved.

Jack Kemp, who blazed the trail for Reagan's conversion from austerity to growth, can no longer deal in sweeping macroeconomic situations. As secretary of Housing and Urban Development, he must harness supply-side incentives to microeconomic goals

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of invigorating the inner city and its residents—a daunting task.

The most obvious unfinished economic goal is the reduction of government that thoroughly eluded Reagan. But this is an old-fashioned Republican battle cry that has roused few pulses over the last half-century. Reagan himself expresses eagerness to return to the "mashed potato" circuit to plug the balanced budget constitutional amendment and the line-item veto. Even the Great Communicator will have difficulty breathing life into those instruments of governmental accountancy.

Although the federal government still spends too much and meddles too much, the citizenry is thankful for its lowered profile. Rep. Vin Weber of Minnesota, a rising young figure in the conservative movement, says he cannot remember the last time a constituent complained about OSHA or the EPA. Like Bennett and Bell, Weber sees the uncongenial issues of contras and abortion as the cutting edge.

Extending the Reagan agenda in the military arena is even more difficult than extending it in economics. While Reagan's last budget calls for a 2 percent defense increase in real money (adjusted to inflation), nobody thinks Congress will approve that much. Even zero growth seems beyond attainment.

The new détente with the Soviet Union, following incessant propaganda against supposed Pentagon waste, has applied the coup de grâce to public support for high military budgets. The lone Reagan military innovation, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), has only Kemp and Bennett as staunch supporters in the Bush Administration—neither of them able to provide much support while tending to their new duties.

The consequences of abandoning SDI lie in the still dim future. Not so with the Reagan Doctrine, the attempted counterattack against Communist expansion. Successful as it may well prove on the other side of the world in Afghanistan and Angola, it has failed dismally in Central America, and the results may be measured in months not years.

Secretary of State-designate James A. Baker III has been warned that the collapse of the contras in Nicaragua, which seems so imminent, dooms hopes of holding off the Communist tide in El Salvador. It is neither hyperbole nor paranoia to expect that the Mexican-American border may turn into a fortified line during the life of the Bush Administration.

Baker's answer is to put pressure on Mikhail Gorbachev to call off Sandinista expansion in Central America. The contra alternative is impossible, says Baker, because there is no public support for it. As Bush's presidential campaign chairman, he publicly defended the candidate's campaign silence on this critical issue on grounds that polls show 80 percent public opposition to the contras.

"There is an unfinished agenda and there is a lot of popular steam behind it," says Jeffrey Bell. "The problem is that prominent conservative leaders, almost without exception, don't agree with the agenda of the conservative movement's rank and file."

But the support figures are reversed among the rank-and-file of the conservative movement. Here is the second most obvious illustration of Jeff Bell's theory that the conservative rank-and-file and the conservative elite are out of tune with each other. It is second only to abortion.

Abortion is the preeminent moral question for the millions who feel strongly about it, but it is also a symbolic manifestation of deep-seated yearning for a return to traditional and family values. It is one of many such concerns that were played down by the Reagan Administration and truly constitute an unfinished agenda: choice in education, reforms in criminal justice, religious reaction to the secularization of society. But abortion is the most emotional, the most important, and the most divisive of the social issues.

Nobody can doubt the sincerity of Reagan's opposition to abortion, following his support as governor of California for a legalization law. Nevertheless, he gave the pro-life position no more than lip service the past eight years, a lassitude most welcome to his political advisers. Even so doughty a conservative stalwart as Lyn Nofziger considered Nellie Gray and her annual anti-abortion march to be a nuisance.

They could not be ignored, if only for political reasons. Bush was an astute enough politician in 1980 to see that his fuzzy position on abortion blocked his long-range presidential ambitions. He tempered his conversion to the pro-life camp by exempting abortions for rape, incest, and the life of the mother—a concession to Bush's old backers in the Planned Parenthood Federation and perhaps to Barbara Bush.

The exceptions may be supported by many sincere opponents of abortion, but they also demonstrate the gap between the elite and populist streams. If the latter oppose abortion as an immoral crime against God's laws made permissible under civil law by judicial edict, how is it possible to make exceptions for expedience's sake?

These exceptions are but one indication of the deep unease the conservative elite feel over the issue. They are uncomfortable talking about abortion and refuse to view it as a serious issue—only the concern of a noisy pressure group. Nowhere is the gap between the country club and the Elks club wider. The non-Republicans who have voted for Ronald Reagan and George Bush in no small part because of the abortion question are treated as interlopers in the Republican home.

That explains why Bush, in a seemingly automatic response, blithely broke his campaign promise to name a stringently anti-abortion secretary of Health and Human Services. Dr. Louis Sullivan is at best confused about abortion and at worst pro-choice, from the standpoint of the pro-life movement. The new President never would have named a suspected unilateral disarmer to the Pentagon or a suspected tax increaser to the Treasury.

Put simply, all but a small fraction of conservative leaders view abortion as a political problem rather than a deep-seated social concern, and even its political importance is underestimated. While a majority of Americans are pro-choice, exit polls from the 1988 election show that the intensity lies on the anti-abortion side—which explains the remarkable success the pro-life forces are having in statewide popular balloting.

What the conservative elite miss in the abortion issue is how deeply moral questions affect the conservative rank-and-file. Retired Adm. James Watkins, in proposing antidiscrimination protection for AIDS victims as chairman of President Reagan's commission, inveighed against moralizing in dealing with the disease. He has expressed contempt for the "right-wingers" who opposed his recommendation. Yet Watkins ended up as Bush's secretary of energy.

Standing beside Watkins as he was announced was drug czar Bennett, who talks about contras and abortion as unfinished business of the Reagan agenda. The fact that he will get precious little support from his colleagues in the new administration suggests that agenda will not be completed any time soon. The question is how long it will take the conservative leaders to catch up with their rank-and-file. □

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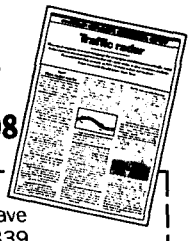

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William McGurn

A BANANA REPUBLIC BAEDEKER

If you're traveling to the Third World, don't leave home without it.
Or better yet, don't leave home at all.

By the old Moulmein pagoda
looking eastward to the sea,
There's a Burma girl a-setting,
and I know she thinks o' me;
For the wind is in the palm trees
and the temple bells they say:
"Come you back, you British soldier;
Come you back to Mandalay!"
—Rudyard Kipling

Although the empire Kipling celebrated in verse has long since receded into history, even today the Fates still call men to leave hearth and home for some godforsaken patch of land at the far end of the earth. Xanadu, Eden, Shangri-la, call it what you will; the dream of a simpler time and a simpler place remains, whispers of another world in which the wine flows freely and the maidens are soft and . . . well . . . maidenly.

However faint these familiar strains have become, every Walter Mitty chained to his desk can still hear the echoes running through his soul. Nor are they entirely implausible. Looking up at the Potala Palace set high atop the Tibetan plateau, watching the sun dip slowly over the Singapore horizon, or simply ogling the flesh on the beaches of Rio de Janeiro, what man who has left civilization behind can think his quest in vain? Except Kipling had it backward: Today's traveler aims to leave the white man's burden behind.

In the half-decade since I forsook the secure environs of Reagan's America for shores unknown, journalism has taken me (and kindly paid my way) across a healthy swath of the globe. Mostly it has been smooth sailing, for even the most wide-tied Babbitt soon learns that it is possible to recreate the comforts of Main Street USA in the most incongruous of places. Karachi has its Holiday Inn, Buenos Aires accepts American Express, and the golden arches of McDonald's have even made their way to the bottom of Rome's fabled Spanish Steps, another import, just like spaghetti.

Yet there exist lands where an L. L. Bean knapsack only singles one out as a likely mark, places where credit ratings are unknown and life (human, at least) is cheap. Here in the heart of darkness, with no Arthur Frommer to clear the way, the adventurer stands alone. These are the real Shangri-las, the Brave Old World of the Third World: countries like Mexico, Lebanon, Chile, the Ivory Coast, Mozambique, Ghana, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Argentina, Fiji, Turkey, the Philippines, and France.

Over the years I have set foot in a goodly number of these spots, whether it be sweating it out with the mujahedeen in the Khost valley or freezing my behind off one Christmas Eve on the snow-capped hilltops surrounding Beirut. Although far from comprehensive, these ventures have been enough to qualify me for United Premier Mileage Plus and impress on me one inalienable truth: local color is universal. Save for climate and food, all banana republics are exactly the same, which is to say that the knowledge required to handle a Latin American sheriff or bargain down a Malaysian opium dealer is likely to be the same sort of stuff that will get you past a Shanghai customs agent or strike a deal with an Arab camel trader. Yet this is precisely the sort of crucial information that never quite makes it into the Sunday travel supplements, dependent as these publications are on the good will of potential advertisers like Air Cyprus and the Syrian Tour Board.

Hence the following Banana Republic Baedeker. In the interest of trouble-free travel, it accordingly follows the same point-by-point formula of the standard travel guides.

AIRPORTS. This will be your first introduction to the Third World, and a few hours trying to reconfirm your Air Lanka flight on to Katmandu (Istanbul via Prague) will teach you that the greatest contribution of the English-speaking world to Western civilization is not the Magna Carta but the queue. The line is unheard of outside the Anglo-Saxon world. Turn the other cheek here and you'll find that the last flight out of Baluchistan for the next two weeks just filled up without you—even though you're holding a seat "guaranteed" by your agent back in Hoboken.

On top of this, banana republics have a system of featherbedding that would be the envy of Arthur Scargill. Ninety-year-old men fight with 9-year-old boys for the privilege of hauling your bags ten feet, where the next shift takes over for another five rupees. The best rule is to travel light, as your load will doubtless be lightened for you. In the event your bags or reservations are lost, moreover, don't count on solace from the airport bar. A worrying percentage of banana republics today are Muslim and frown on selling hootch, even to infidels.

A final hint. Just because the locals check in poultry or babies along with their suitcases, don't assume that anything goes—especially drugs. Remember the scene in *Midnight Express* in which that stupid twit from Long Island is caught getting on the plane with a dozen cakes of hashish taped to his chest? Keep it in mind when temptation strikes. No matter how corrupt the local constabulary, a blond-haired, blue-eyed Yank caught in the act makes a nice trophy to show off as proof that they are cracking down

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on the international drug trade. The Japanese put Paul McCartney in the pokey for a few joints, so just imagine what they'd do to you in, say, Jakarta.

For some inexplicable reason, Australians have had an especially hard time learning this lesson, and they regularly end up on the wrong end of a rope in places like Malaysia, which, like most banana republics, has a death penalty and isn't bashful about using it.

WEATHER. Always iffy in the Third World. Anyone who's ever been forced to fly mainland China's airline, CAAC—which made world headlines last August when its crew landed a plane in Hong Kong's harbor and agents later tried to kidnap a wounded stewardess out of the hospital and back to the mainland—has had at least one flight canceled because of "bad weather." Indeed, Communist countries appear to have been singled out for this special kind of bad weather, invariably blamed also for the "bad harvests" in such places as the USSR, China, and Vietnam. Check the records and you'll find that this remarkable stretch of bad weather began respectively in 1917, 1949, and 1975.

CARS. Okay. You've taken a cab from the airport to your hotel, and the next day you learn from the porter that you paid about twenty-six times the going rate. That's natural. So you want a car. That's natural too. Two things to consider: First, just because a country has Avis doesn't mean it has gas. Second, take out the insurance. Running over a Bengali native is small potatoes, but hit someone's cow and you'll find yourself liable for about half the country's gross national product.

CLOTHING. Forget about Banana Republic. As Jim Sterba reported in the *Wall Street Journal*, that stuff's all right for shopping malls and Camp Wanataka, but try it in a real banana republic and you'll look like one of the Three Stooges on safari. Or like Michael Dukakis at Yellowstone.

If you want to fit in with the natives, get yourself some Dallas Cowboy T-shirts and some Levis.

HOTELS. This is an easy one. Avoid Authentic at all costs, unless you're partial to dirty sheets and cockroaches. What you really want is kitsch, i.e., "real India" or "real Egypt" as interpreted by Sheraton's Milan-based designer. No need to feel guilty. Your great-great-grandfather came to America in the first place so you wouldn't have to live like some rug weaver in northern Peru.

Be particularly suspicious of the grand old dames, places whose fame rests on celebrated guests like Rudyard Kipling, Ernest Hemingway, or Somerset Maugham. These people picked these places when they were *poor*, and unless you want to enjoy the same plumbing Kipling had, the Ramada is not to be sneered at.

The Peking Hotel is a splendid example of what to avoid, a grand old dame still resting on its pre-Mao laurels. At a coffee shop in the lobby, which the tourist books all herald as the center of the Peking jet set, my party ran into a group of drunken Norwegians studying acupuncture and staying at the local Friendship Hotel. We were grateful. "I learned one thing from China," a tall Norwegian told my brother Brian. "Don't trust anything with the word 'friendship' in it." Sound advice.

As for hostels, you get what you pay for, and if you're paying two bucks a night don't be surprised to find yourself sharing a bed with the keeper's syphilitic son and a descendant of every insect who made it onto Noah's Ark.

SHOPPING. Forget about the Lost Ark or the Rosetta stone. All the good stuff was long ago carted off to the Louvre. Today most of the local crafts are made in factories in Hong Kong, which is why the brassware in the old bazaar in Tunis looks remarkably like the brassware in Indonesia. In Thailand they'll arrest you if you're caught trying to take a Buddha—any Buddha—out of the country.

Now and again you'll come across a place in which local marketing practices are a tad rusty. In Lhasa, for example, a group of Khampas surrounded me in a noodle shop seeking some English phrases that might help them boost sales of the ornate daggers and trinket boxes they try to pass off between riots as genuine Tibetan. Hitherto their strategy had been to thrust said artifact in front of a foreigner's face and ask, "How muchie?"

I divided the Tibetans into two groups, giving each a different sales pitch. The first group were taught to say "antique jewelry"; the second, "old crap." Instructions were left to test the market, compare results, and go with the winning pitch. So be careful next time you buy some antique jewelry in the Barkhor.

PHRASE BOOKS. Forget it. Remember introductory French—"the pen of my aunt is on the table of my uncle."? Well, standard phrase books have much the same utility. But there is one sheet going around that is quite useful. It focuses on the practical: Arabic translations for indispensable phrases such as "the red blindfold would be lovely, excellency," or "if you will do me the kindness of not harming my genital appendages, I will gladly reciprocate by betraying my country in public."

STUDY ABROAD. To the Rutgers sophomore, a year abroad in some exotic clime can obviously seem infinitely preferable to another semester staring out the window in Psych 101. Yet despite the propaganda about people-to-people understanding and the brotherhood of man, the proletariat in many of these places is still plagued by a false consciousness.

What you really want is kitsch, i.e., "real India" or "real Egypt" as interpreted by Sheraton's Milan-based designer.

In Peking, for example, African students are protesting what they say is the Celestial Empire's own brand of apartheid. Chinese want to restrict the number of Chinese girlfriends an African student can have over four years to one, and a refusal by said Africans at Nanjing University to register girlfriends with the authorities led to a Christmas Eve riot and Chinese protesters carrying signs reading "Black devils get lost." The Africans also complain about the language itself: the Chinese for Africa is *Feizhou*, or "bad continent," while for America it's *Meiguo*, or "beautiful country."

Stick to London.

GENERAL EFFICIENCY. Not a strong point; travel brochures tend to refer to a "relaxed lifestyle." Banana republics import their phone systems from Bolivia and their engineers from Italy. Try to be understanding. Filipinos, to take one example, are the nicest people in the world, but imagine Newark run by Mexico and you have some idea why Cory is having such a hard time. I once read a *Reader's Digest* quote that summed up the differences in perception at work here. "The problem with you gringos," said one Spaniard, "is that you think *mañana* means tomorrow. It means 'not today.'"

So much for the down side. You knew all that, you say. What about the magical moments that make it all worthwhile: your first look at the Taj Mahal, a night exchanging snippets of poetry with a Misquito Indian, or simply getting sloshed in Wanchai with Suzie Wong?

You asked.

PEOPLE. Got to be careful here. Standard guidebooks invariably describe natives of banana republics as "warm," "friendly," or "passionate." All this is code for bloodthirsty. Ever hear the *Belgians* called warm?

Now ask yourself *why* someone should be overly friendly to you, a complete stranger, unless you're a big geek.

CULTURE. Also misleading, especially when preceded by the word "proud." The past means nothing here, even though for most Third World countries it's all they've got. Remember Mesopotamia, the "cradle of civilization"? They never tell you it's Iraq. Or Phoenicia, "birthplace of the alphabet"? Try Lebanon. We're talking about places where the aristocracy is anyone with a Trinitron.

Be prepared for disappointments, too, when you finally do get out to the sites. There are thousands of miles of the Great Wall in China, but they take everyone to the same 600 yards. In Egypt, the chin has just slid off the Sphinx, and all the good parts of the Parthenon are in London.

They're not called ruins for nothing.

WOMEN. A key indicator. In an effort to lighten a moment dominated by Soviet artillery falling all around me, I asked an Afghan resistance chief how many children he had. "Two," he answered proudly. "And five daughters." Feminists beware.

When in Rome do as the Romans do. Women who go braless and wear short-shorts are bound to be taken for whores, which doubtless they mostly are. But it can be disconcerting to have your virtue questioned (and, more important, threatened) by some half-shaven Bedouin with rotted teeth.

Western Casanovas are even more easily misled. In places like Manila and Bangkok, to be sure, you can own a native lovely for roughly the price of a Big Mac. But honor is at a premium in the Third World even if chastity is not, and the woman you take for a floozie all too often turns out to be the mayor's daughter.

FOOD. A big plus. Although the unwashed masses by now prefer cheeseburgers and Cokes, these remain status symbols in most places. The upshot is that for a pittance you can feast on fresh fish, tropical fruits, and natural breads spurned by the natives. Sanitation, of course, is spotty. An article in the English-language *China Daily* complained about the problem rabies poses for restaurants that specialize in dog. And that dirty glass that has just been plopped in front of you? Don't ask. Even in the best of circumstances, you don't want to know.

ENTERTAINMENT. Even better than food. Because no one has any rights whatsoever in banana republics, they offer all manner of otherwise forbidden spectacles formerly suppressed by missionaries. Traditionally this involves two poor beasts clawing each other to death for the pleasure of a leering mob, with bets taken on the sidelines. →

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Religious events can be equally diverting and will make you forever look down on mere bullfights. In Tibet, they have "sky burials," in which the deceased family member is taken up a hillside at dawn and hacked to bite-sized bits for the vultures. In India, tradition endures with the *suttee*, in which women are expected to join their late husbands on the funeral pyre. Although the British tried to stamp this out during the Raj and though it is still officially outlawed, occasionally a man's family will help a reluctant spouse do her widowly duty. In Muslim countries again, they take that eye-for-an-eye business pretty seriously and put it out there for everyone to see. Not for the squeamish.

ARMIES. Last but certainly not least. All banana republics have in common developing, or rather undeveloping, economies characterized by crushing taxes imposed to support huge armies that occasionally fight for the Russians in places like Angola when not busy putting down democracy at home. In right-wing countries they tend mostly to domestic concerns like their fair share of the international drug market.

Keep in mind that you're in a country with a president whose first name probably begins with "General," and behave accordingly.

If all this sounds negative, it's not meant to. Banana republics can be charming vacation spots, particularly if you're able to make it out without the intervention of the American Consulate. They also make lesser talent bloom. Who would look at a Gauguin if he hadn't painted it in Tahiti? Who would read Kipling if he hadn't been to India? And who would listen to you at last night's reception if you hadn't just come back from Managua?

The point is to be aware but not put off by the little inconveniences mentioned here. "Everyone say the white man go and we have no problems," said an old Malay cop in northern Sri Lanka, brought out of retirement to keep the peace between Hindu Tamils and Buddhist Sinhalese in the former British colony of Ceylon. "Well, the white man go and we have more problems."

That's what makes it all so fun. □

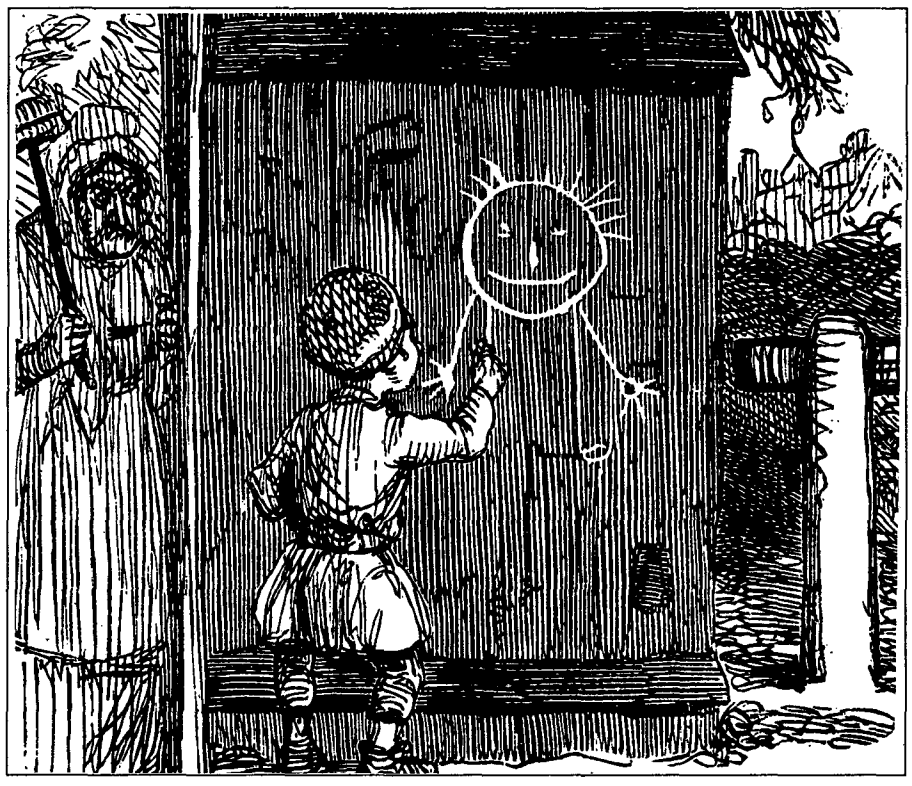
Arch Puddington

THOSE WERE THE DAYS: THE SDS REVISITED

If the New Left failed politically, it was because students were no substitute for an exploited proletariat—and because the U.S. never had an exploited proletariat.

The question of why the New Left failed as a political movement continues to perplex and torment those who actually participated in the campus revolution of the 1960s. How, they wonder, did a movement born in high idealism turn so rapidly into something sinister and unclean? How, by the end, had the New Left become what its founders had early on vowed it would never become? Gandhi, Camus, and Jefferson had been replaced by Mao, Fanon, and the Black Panthers as beacons of inspiration. A commitment to broadening democratic participation had degenerated into a celebration of ghetto insurrection. Those who once boasted of the uniquely American nature of their egalitarian faith had come to despise just about everything about America and its people, from the nation's political and economic systems to its working-class citizens (with their "fascist" unions) to the elite universities (which, ironically, tolerated some of the most scandalous excesses of the era).

The most frequent explanation for the New Left's demise, and the least convincing, is the Vietnam war. The war, it is argued, warped and alienated a generation of dedicated young people whose instincts were otherwise humane and reformist. In fact, the war's principal effect was to thrust the New Left into a position of prominence unprecedented for a left-wing movement in the United States. The Students for a Democratic Society, the best-known of the multitude of New Left organizations spawned during the sixties, puttered along with a few thousand members until President Johnson began escalating the American presence in Southeast Asia. By 1968, the SDS claimed 100,000 members, a remarkable figure that was all the more impressive since membership was restricted to a single generation of young Americans. Thus, in a little over a half-decade, the SDS had grown to become arguably the largest radical organization in American history. The reason for this phenomenal growth had little to do with the group's philosophy or its projects in urban, working-class neighborhoods. Rather, it was the reaction of draft-age students to an unpopular war that gave the SDS, and the New Left generally, the appearance of a mass phenomenon.



A more fundamental reason for the New Left's degeneration can be found in that movement's principal contribution to radical theory: the thesis that in the future it would be students, and not the proletariat, who would function as the engine of world revolution. This notion, initially propounded by sociologist C. Wright Mills, was not as unique as its advocates liked to believe. Lenin, after all, had exalted the intellectual *cum* professional revolutionary while belittling trade unions for their tendency to sacrifice the long-range goals of the revolution to the immediate economic interests of their members. Although the sixties produced more than its quota of would-be Lenins and Maos, the Lenin analogy should not be exaggerated. The SDS was at first deeply committed to the idea of democracy, both as ideology and as principle for internal organization. Moreover, the SDS leaders did not perceive students as a narrow elite destined to draw forth the revolutionary consciousness of other, potentially radical constituencies. Students, in other words, were not a substitute proletariat. Instead, students were lumped together with blacks and the

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poor as powerless objects trapped in an impersonal and oppressive system.

Thus no matter how strong ran the New Left's concern for civil rights and the working class, it was the problems of the young that ultimately sustained the movement. SDS manifestoes and discussion documents often resembled compilations of student complaints, worries, and prejudices. In modern-day America, we were told, human relations lacked "authenticity," work was meaningless, the system demanded conformity, universities functioned as remote diploma mills, society was traumatized by the specter of The Bomb. Tom Hayden described student radicals as harbingers of "a revolution that would reduce complexity to moral simplicity, that would restore emotion to religion, that would in fact give man back his 'roots.'" And in a telling phrase, Hayden characterized SDS members as "young intellectuals in an anti-intellectual society."

This was not the kind of language one was used to hearing on the left, which continued to employ class categories in analyzing American society. In fact, many New Leftists rejected socialism as irrelevant to the specific conditions and problems of the United States. Hayden himself declined to join the Young People's Socialist League, arguing that socialism was too European a concept to be of use to a distinctively American radical creed. Later, of course, Hayden was to embrace movements that espoused philosophies far more statist and un-American than the moderate social democracy of the YPSL. But at the time, Hayden was more enamored of Camus than Marx; he was fond of preaching the beauty of total commitment to a transcendent cause, and placed the highest value on physical courage, "laying your body on the line," and "guts." (Hayden first came to national attention through a wire service photograph of Southern police battering his prone body during civil rights demonstrations in Mississippi.)

Although some New Leftists thought of themselves as socialists, there was an almost universal suspicion of existing left-wing organizations. The stated reason for this hostility was a perception of the Old Left as dogmatic, sterile, and sectarian. An undeclared, and perhaps unconscious, factor was that while liberals tended to applaud uncritically the emergence of the New Left, those with experience in radical movements did not hesitate to raise uncomfortable questions about the New Left's ideas and tactics.

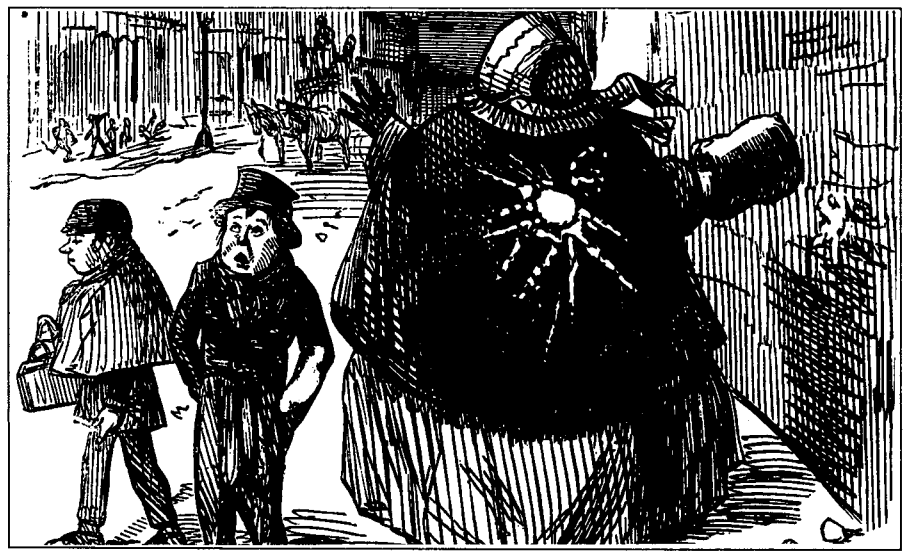
In any event, it soon became apparent that the Old Left's dogmatism was as nothing compared to the tyranny of movement ethics to which the New Left soon succumbed. The maxim that the "personal is the political," one of the more dubiously famous slogans of the period, was received as a mandate for personal behavior by those who took their movement responsibilities seriously. Every action, every decision, every opinion had to be carefully weighed according to the prevailing standards of the small, tightly knit group of radicals with whom SDS members lived and worked. In his book *Democracy in the Streets* (1987), James Miller recounts how a group of SDSers in Cleveland debated for twenty-four hours the question of whether to go to the beach.

Ironically, the New Left also committed a number of the same political mistakes that had plagued previous generations of radicals. The Communists, socialists, and other leftist groups had devoted considerable energy in ultimately fruitless attempts to organize the unemployed and the poor. In this endeavor, the Old Left had the excuse that there was a Depression on, and that the notion of the outcasts of society turning to socialism was not all that far-fetched. The SDS, by contrast, launched its campaign at a time when booming economic growth and expanded government welfare were raising millions out of poverty and enabling many more to enjoy a middle-class standard of living for the first time.

Despite its numerous mistakes, the New Left might not have crashed so precipitously had it more clearly understood and better appreciated American society. While the young generation of radicals prided itself for not trading in American roots for foreign ideologies, the New Left at heart did not much care for the American political system or culture. To be sure, in its complaints about mass culture, the essential emptiness of existence in modern industrial society, and the loneliness of contemporary man, the New Left was doing no more than taking up where many social critics of the fifties had left off. The writings of these analysts were required reading for SDS members, and while the SDS may have regarded Trotsky as fundamentally irrelevant to the American experience, it took with utmost seriousness the themes struck by David Riesman and other critics of mass society and mass culture. Needless to say, the SDS took these theories and extended them to their most ludicrous extremes, constructing an image of America bearing little resemblance to real life. Thus the paradox: while an official SDS declaration like the famous Port Huron statement spoke approvingly of American democracy as a model for others, its description of the individual's relationship to that system was so pessimistic and jaundiced that one might justifiably ask how such a system could be a model for anything.

The SDS was at first deeply committed to the idea of democracy, both as ideology and as principle for internal organization.

In any event, the SDS was never as enthusiastic about the challenge of reforming American democracy as it was about the chimera of "participatory democracy." Although the term was never precisely defined, we have a sense of how the concept might have operated in practice through the experience of internal SDS life. There is, in fact, no more compelling evidence of the immaturity of the New Left than the utter irresponsibility of the members toward the well-being of their most cherished institution. Had the Vietnam war not provided the SDS with an issue of mass appeal for the student populace, it is altogether possible that the membership's commitment to radical egalitarianism and its infantile hostility to organizational discipline would have brought about the New Left's demise even earlier. Meetings and conferences deteriorated into chaotic ventings of personal frustration and ultra-sincerity. At one point, in obeisance to the predominant mood of anti-elitism, meetings were conducted without leaders or chairmen. With no restrictions placed on speakers, sessions rambled on for hours, and the inarticulateness that came to be worn as a badge of honor during the sixties infected even these precocious "intellectuals in an anti-intellectual society."



And what of the New Left's attitude toward Communism? Here, the SDS initially betrayed a posture of ambivalence, and in that ambivalence were clear signs of big troubles to come. To be sure, the Soviet Union was regarded with disdain for its internal repression, its bureaucratic conservatism, and its imperial domination of Eastern Europe. Nor did the other models of Communism—China or, more recently, Castro's Cuba—seem to appeal to the SDS in its formative period.

But the crimes of the Soviet Union and the dangers posed by Communist expansionism were treated as far less serious problems than the menace posed by anti-Communism. To a certain degree, this attitude was one of the unfortunate legacies of McCarthyism. SDS leaders often came from families in which strong liberal or even radical opinions prevailed. The parents of some had been socialists; in a few cases, the parents had been members of the Communist party and the children had had fleeting experiences with Communist youth organizations. A hostility to McCarthyism was part of their political upbringing, and some SDS members had in addition witnessed favorite professors threatened or purged.

Added to a visceral dislike for Red-baiting, the SDS firmly believed that, as C. Wright Mills put it, the left could not thrive in a Cold War atmosphere. Naturally enough, those who perceived anti-Communism as a roadblock to certain political goals had a stake in judging Communism as a rather benign force, both in internal American politics and in the world generally. If anti-Communism threatened the objectives of the left, the most effective antidote was a powerful commitment to what has come to be known as anti-anti-Communism.

The logic of this position can be clearly discerned in the Port Huron

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statement, the founding document of the SDS. In contrast to the stirring calls for democratic change in the United States, and an unequivocal demand for a renunciation of American alliances with right-wing dictators (a list in which Charles de Gaulle was included), the document takes on a cautious, almost *Realpolitik* tone in its treatment of the Soviets. Particularly notable for its absence is any straightforward criticism of the Soviet Union's foreign policy, including the subjugation of Eastern Europe. In a deliberately vague phrase, moreover, Port Huron calls for "the acceptance of status quo possessions," a formula that could easily be interpreted as referring to Soviet control over the satellites. But there was no ambiguity concerning the SDS position on the division of Germany: Port Huron was opposed to proposals for reunification, and urged the United States to abandon efforts to bring about the dismantlement of the Berlin Wall, which was described as a "symbol of the irrationality of the Cold War." Furthermore, the East German regime of Ulbricht and the West German government of Adenauer were regarded as morally equivalent, the former characterized as "totalitarian" and the latter as "authoritarian."

The Communist question came to play a pivotal role in the SDS's conflict with the League for Industrial Democracy.[1] The LID, established around the beginning of the century as a vehicle for the propagation of socialist ideas on the campus, had evolved into a social democratic organization with strong links to the trade union movement. An agreement was reached whereby the LID's campus wing, grown moribund over the years, would function as the organizational instrument for the growing ranks of young radical activists involved in the civil rights movement. Eventually, the Student League for Industrial Democracy was renamed the Students for a Democratic Society. The LID relationship was maintained, however, an arrangement that provided the SDS with tax-exempt status and important connections to organized labor.

Problems soon developed over the SDS's attitude toward the unions ("too rich and sluggish," according to Hayden) and its anti-anti-Communism. Things eventually boiled over when the SDS decided to allow Communists to participate in the organization's affairs. This decision was reached not because the SDS was impressed by the abilities of Communist party youth, but simply because it regarded any attempt to restrict membership as a capitulation to the ethos of McCarthyism.

To the SDS, the reaction of the LID was incomprehensible. The LID leadership, in the view of the New Leftists, was made up of aging former radicals who had made their peace with the system and were jealous and resentful of a younger generation full of new ideas and new priorities. It was inconceivable that a putatively left-wing organization could make a principled issue of the SDS's tolerance of minimal relations with Communists. By this time, of course, Communism was no longer a force in domestic affairs, the party having been shattered by McCarthyism, the Hungarian Revolution, and the revelation of Stalin's crimes. Nonetheless, for the LID the issue was one of high principle: to cooperate in any degree with the avowed enemies of democracy was to betray one's professed radical faith. Furthermore, the LID understood that a failure to grasp the true nature of the Soviet Union had devastated the left in the past, and would inevitably doom any future chances for a revived democratic left. Nor did LID leaders look on New Leftists as "the best and most committed generation of young people in American history," as an oft-repeated refrain of the time had it. Unlike a growing number of liberals who were prepared to excuse the expanding list of New Left frivolities and foolishness, these veteran social democrats saw the SDS as arrogant, immature, and eager to commit the very blunders that had led to so many past tragedies.

[1]The author of this essay served for nine years as executive director of the League for Industrial Democracy. Although not associated with the LID during the SDS period, he has worked closely with a number of people who were involved in that controversy.

James Miller recounts how a group of SDSers in Cleveland debated for twenty-four hours the question of whether to go to the beach.

These apprehensions proved all too valid. While the SDS continued to keep its distance from Soviet-style Communism, the New Left began to discover attractive features in China, North Vietnam, Cuba, and similar regimes. In keeping with their anti-materialist credo, these young radicals found themselves drawn to Third World Communism not because of alleged guarantees of jobs and social welfare protection, but because these regimes seemed to be engaged in the creation of a New Man under socialism, a goal the stodgy Soviets had pretty much abandoned by that time.

For at least some in the SDS, the potential appeal of totalitarian systems existed from the outset. Writing in 1962, Tom Hayden advanced the notion that under certain circumstances a totalitarian system could easily gain the support of the masses. "Surely there is considerable evidence that dictatorships exist not only through total control of the means of violence . . . but also through sincerely expressed popular support. People in such a society can be mobilized by a sense of mission, an identity with some transcendent cause that appears to be attainable." Such people, he opined, feel "a solidarity with their fellows," and are "happy, integrated into a group, purposeful, dedicated, sacrificing."

At this point, Hayden was simply playing with ideas. Yet in retrospect his musings have a prophetic quality, foreshadowing the political odyssey undertaken by Hayden and the New Left in the next few years. In 1966, Hayden visited North Vietnam, the first of a steady stream of antiwar activists to journey to the other side. He returned awestruck at what he and his traveling companion, Staughton Lynd, called Hanoi's "'rice-roots' democracy." "We suspect," they wrote, "that colonial American town meetings and current Vietnamese village meetings, Asian peasants' leagues and Black Belt sharecroppers' unions have much in common." To have written such absurdities places Hayden and his colleagues in the same category as the political pilgrims of an earlier era, when Stalin's Soviet Union was the icon for the left. Indeed, the New Left's errors are magnified by the willful ignoring of the unfortunate experiences of a previous generation of radicals seeking out a socialist utopia in a foreign land.

Perhaps most regrettable is that those who passed through the New Left, with few exceptions, never really undertook a systematic rethinking about America's role in the world, and the specific challenge posed by the Soviet Union. Unlike in France, where a powerful New Left jettisoned Maoism for a committed anti-totalitarianism (and transformed that country's political culture), the American left has modified, but not really changed, its world view.

The result has been nothing short of disastrous, because though the New Left failed as a political movement, the influence it has subsequently exerted over American politics has been much more powerful than anyone supposed. The causes born in the sixties today constitute liberalism's agenda, the adversarial style practiced by yesterday's "underground journalists" is *de rigeur* throughout the media, and the example of C. Wright Mills, the "engaged" scholar par excellence, has been emulated by hundreds. Ironically, in view of the New Left's intellectual pretensions, the movement produced many more apparatchiks than great thinkers. One of the most prescient ideas of the Port Huron statement, the proliferation of single-issue organizations, has been fulfilled, and today a dazzling multitude of institutes, lobbies, task forces, and coalitions are skillfully guided by men and women who once seemed miserably ill-equipped at the practical work of politics and contemptuous of organizational responsibility. Collectively, the aggregation of single-issue lobbies is potent enough to veto any aspiring Democratic presidential hopeful.

Back when the New Left took pride in its audacious irresponsibility, liberals frequently urged radicals to "work within the system." They have not only learned to work within a system they still don't particularly like, they have learned to thrive in it. □

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James Ring Adams

THE BIG FIX

The Savings and Loan Crisis has become the nation's biggest economic problem and—thanks to the United States Congress—its biggest political scandal.

Two billboards on I-30 West catch the spirit of present-day Dallas. One, over a portrait of a tractor-trailer, reads:

Data SHRED
Mobile Document Disintegration
On-site destruction

The second, further west, offers a competitor's challenge:

Why shred? We pulp.

The Texas thrift crisis should well be making a growth industry of on-site document disintegration. As investigators pull at the strands, they are unraveling a network of fraud and shady dealing far wider and older than anyone had suspected just a few months earlier. The most expensive of the thrift failures are turning out to be the products of a close-knit cabal designed to plunder deposits and obstruct regulators. The most notorious thrift owners have already been connected both with suspected agents of organized crime and with powerful members of Congress.

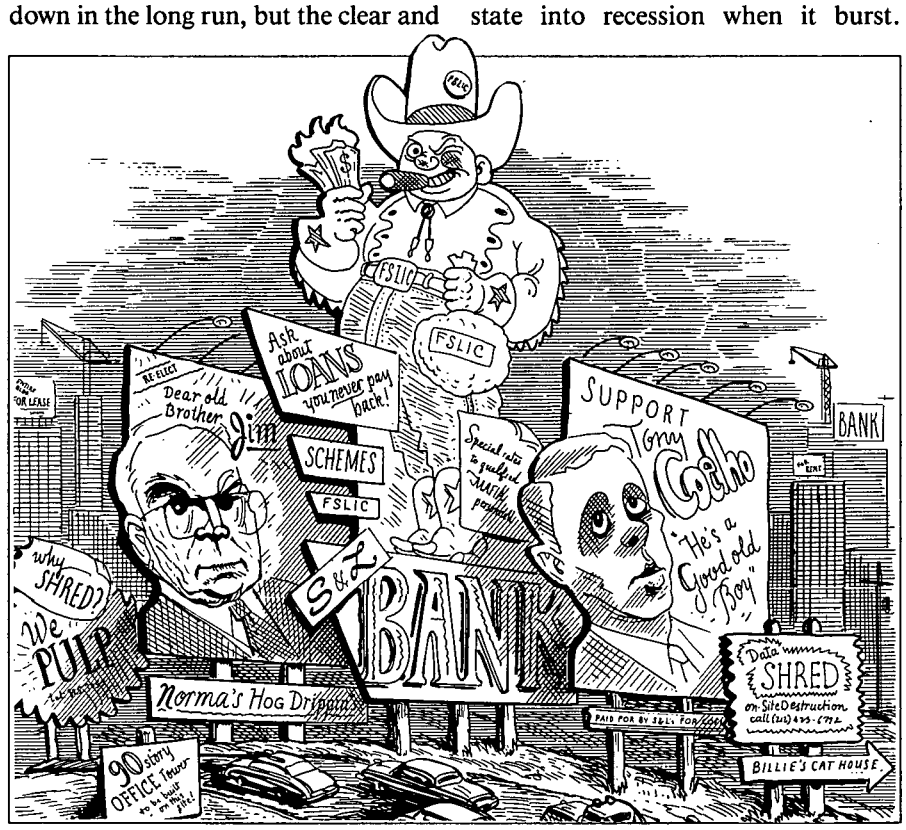
These ties preoccupy an FBI-IRS-Justice Department North Dallas Task Force of eighty agents and staff, the largest single white-collar crime investigation in memory. The Task Force has already charged twenty-eight individuals and convicted seventeen, and its members are settling in for a three-to-five year run. In an earlier thrift case involving development along I-30, the U.S. attorney's office in Dallas won more than one hundred convictions.

This activity puts a new perspective on the savings and loan crisis, which is clearly the single most immediate threat to economic stability in the United States. A consensus is emerging that the thrift industry is now about $100 billion in the hole and that sooner or later the taxpayer will foot most of the bill for the cleanup. This part of the financial system, originally designed to finance home mortgages, is now surviving on blind faith, baling wire, or, depending on your viewpoint, the incredible prestidigitation of Danny Wall, chairman of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board.

The Bank Board supervises the fund that thrift depositors rely on to guarantee their money. That is the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation, also called FSLIC, (pronounced "fizz-lick"), and this fund has been broke for two years in a row. If this fact suddenly sank in on every depositor, we could have a bank panic to equal 1933. According to Milton Friedman, bank runs triggered the Great Depression, and it's anyone's guess what damage they could do today. The federal deficit might grind us down in the long run, but the clear and present danger comes from the bankruptcy of the humble neighborhood thrifts.

But it's still a disaster made in Washington. The thrifts are bankrupt from human failure, not, as the trade associations would like us to think, from an ailing regional economy. Federal studies of recent bank and thrift failures have found that no more than 10 percent can be attributed solely to popular scapegoats like declining oil prices or farm troubles.

Regulators are practically shouting from the housetops that we're up against bad management, bank looting, and big-time fraud, unimaginable fraud so massive that it's the corrupt thrifts that have been hurting the economy. In Texas, the heart of the crisis, one economist put the question to his computer, which happened to hold the most elaborate model of the state economy. He found that wild over-lending by the thrifts had created an artificial bubble that plopped the state into recession when it burst. Developers put up malls and condos just to justify huge loans from compliant thrifts. They left behind a thoroughly glutted and depressed real estate market.



So where were the regulators? Federal examiners have the duty of chasing crooks out of the thrifts and keeping loans on the straight and narrow. It's their job to protect the deposit insurance fund. Why didn't they do their work? The answer is simple, but you won't hear it from a congressional investigation. The examiners tried. Sometimes they tried heroically. But they were frustrated by political interference.

The cabal of thrift-owners had one very big trump, the United States Congress. Judicious fund-raising and personal favors gave them the ear of representatives from Rhode Island to California. When examiners grew too pesky, phone calls to Fernand St Germain, Tony Coelho, and Jim Wright were enough to shoo them off. The cabal had the influence to strangle FSLIC itself. With or without full awareness, a huge majority of the House and Senate voted to withhold the money FSLIC needed to close down the crooks. It may well be the most extensive case of congressional corruption since the Crédit Mobilier scandal of 1878.

To understand the thrift crisis, look at one leader of this cabal, the owner of the Vernon Savings and Loan in the Dallas suburb of Vernon, a self-made hometown boy named Don Ray Dixon. With his gold chains, open shirts, and at one point a well-groomed beard, Dixon reminded the *Texas Monthly* of the country singer Kenny Rogers. But Dixon lived like a gambler; he didn't just sing about it.

Dixon was born in Vernon fifty years ago. He went away to UCLA for his business degree, then kicked around in a series of jobs, including a stint of

James Ring Adams, a former member of the Wall Street Journal *editorial board, is now writing a book on bank supervision under a grant from the Bradley Foundation.*

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unemployment, until the late seventies, when he launched his own Dallas development company. From this base, with some interesting outside help, he bought a hometown thrift and embarked on his now notorious financial career. Dixon did at least a billion dollars of damage in his six years in finance, but he is not unique. Regulators talk about the "Texas 40," the two-score or more insolvent thrifts destroyed by owners just as unscrupulous as Dixon. But we know the most about Dixon, thanks to a flood of documents that FSLIC saw fit to release when it sued him for fraud.

Don Dixon was a man of expensive tastes. He liked exotic cars, Western art, $2 million beach houses and three-star restaurants in France. "That first night in Paris we had dinner at Castel's, the 'in,' very chic private club in St. Germain," wrote Dana Dixon, Don's wife, in a paper later found by federal examiners in the files of Dixon's Vernon Savings and Loan. Under the title "Gastronomique—Fantastique!" Mrs. Dixon gushed about an October 1983 tour of the ritziest restaurants in France. Ostensibly "a bit of market study" for a "world class restaurant" for Dallas, the Dixons and another Vernon couple toured by private plane and 1954 Silver Dawn Rolls Royce in the company of Yolande and Jean Castel, owners of that "'in,' very chic" club. Ushered by their "charming," "witty," and "twinkling" escorts, the Dixons hopped from La Tour d'Argent and Brasserie Lipp in Paris to the Troisgros in Roanne, to the restaurant of Paul Bocuse in Lyon, to Moulin de Mougins in Nice. On the Riviera, they lunched with "a famous French artist, Cesar, and also a movie script writer."

"It was truly a dream trip," exclaimed Mrs. Dixon, "a trip hardly to be imagined by most, and barely to be believed even by those of us who experienced it at first hand." The trip was also paid for by the Vernon Savings and Loan.

Over the next two years, Dixon took further dream trips to France, England, Ireland, Denmark, and Italy, with frequent side trips to Geneva on undisclosed business. On his 1985 jaunt to Italy, Dixon squeezed in stops at both the Bulgari Spa and the Gucci Spa. Overall, according to FSLIC examiners, the Vernon thrift picked up a travel tab of $68,036.98. Dixon at one point submitted a one-month American Express Card bill (including overdue balance) of $34,444.42.

Vernon Savings owned a subsidiary called Vernon Capital Corporation, which in turn owned a California company called Symbolic Cars of La Jolla, Inc., devoted to Dixon's passion of buying and selling classic autos. In July 1986, Symbolic held an auction that sold eight of Dixon's cars for $1.8 million and still managed to lose $200,000. Dixon even had the Vernon subsidiary absorb a $200 charge for towing his classic Hispano-Suiza.

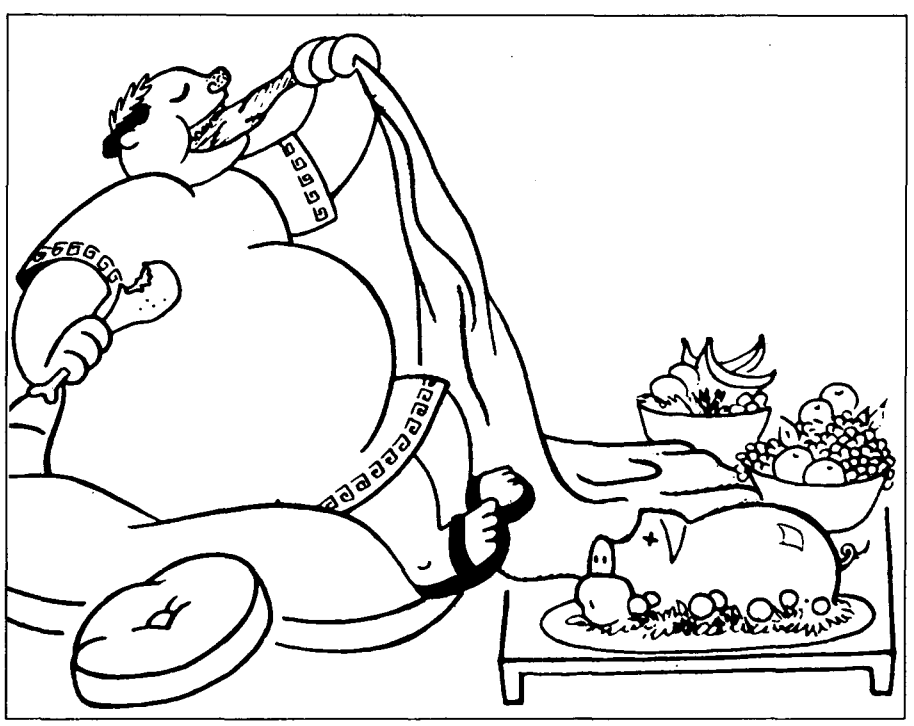
When Dixon desired a *pied-à-terre* in California, Vernon obligingly put up $2 million for a beach house in Del Mar. The Dixons moved in, rent free, during June 1985 and spent nearly $200,000 from a special Vernon account to furnish it. A separate bill for flowers came to $36,780. When the Dixons began building another house in Rancho Santa Fe, California, they flew to London to consult with an interior decorator and buy $489,000 of furnishings. A Vernon subsidiary covered the shopping trip by issuing a half-million dollar note. Dixon covered his walls with Western art, listed on Vernon's books as an asset worth $5.5 million. The feds are still looking for forty missing pieces.

The savings and loan debacle is no longer the product of regional recession, or declining oil prices.

And so it went, in an orgy of vulgar consumption. This tabloid lifestyle may disappoint those looking for some grand scheme behind Dixon's corruption, but it's all too typical of the greatest frauds. Expecting a crash at any moment, they try to spend their money as quickly as they can.

One of Dixon's playthings, however, was no mere self-indulgence. Dixon wanted a yacht, so he bought the 112-foot *High Spirits*, launched in 1928 as the sister ship to the *Sequoia*, the presidential yacht of the Nixon years. Dixon brought the richly appointed ship to a mooring on the Potomac near Washington, D.C.'s soft-shell crab boats, and he placed it at the disposal of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

There's been a fair amount of press about this yacht, and much more about House Speaker Jim Wright's wire-pulling on behalf of Dixon, but somehow it doesn't convey the extent to which Dixon's cabal penetrated the congressional leadership. The "D-triple-C" was the personal creation and nationwide Tammany of California Congressman Tony Coelho, who has parlayed his fund-raising prowess into the third-ranking position in the House of Representative's Democratic hierarchy. As portrayed by *Wall Street Journal* reporter Brooks Jackson in the important new book *Honest Graft* (Knopf), Coelho was a contradiction, engagingly open about his Campaign Committee yet willing to ignore legal restraints in accepting Dixon's help. Coelho used the yacht at least eleven times in 1985 and 1986 to entertain D-triple-C contributors, but he claims not to have noticed that the *High Spirits* captain never billed him for the $2,000 a half-day charter fee or the additional costs for food and drink, often running upwards of $1,300. Other congressmen could use the yacht on similar terms, for a time making arrangements through Martin Franks, Coelho's chief of staff. The bills went straight to Vernon, in apparent violation of the federal campaign finance law. When the story hit the press, an embarrassed Coelho reimbursed the thrift by nearly $50,000.



These congressional party-givers, at a minimum including Texas Representatives J. J. Pickle and Jim Chapman and Coelho himself, may not have realized how deep a swamp they were entering. As champagne poured on dinner cruises down the Potomac, the yacht itself was the center of one of Dixon's typically shady business deals. After buying the *High Spirits*, Dixon sold partnership shares to cronies, Vernon officers, and borrowers, some of whom grumbled that they didn't want it. (One partner was the cabal's Austin lobbyist, a gregarious and persuasive character named Durward Curlee, who lived on the yacht when he came to Washington. When Brooks Jackson questioned Rep. Chapman's parties on the *High Spirits*, the congressman's staff replied that election law allowed Curlee, as a volunteer, to donate the use of his residence.)

This partnership looked bad on Vernon's books, and some partners refused to pay on their notes, so Dixon decided to unload the yacht on two reluctant businessmen who were desperate for a loan. "I continually balked at doing the boat loan," said one of these victims, describing a talk with Dixon, "and he said that's the only way we are going to get the shopping center loan done." In mid-1986, as congressmen feted their donors in the yacht's salon, the two very unhappy borrowers bought it with part of a loan intended to refurbish a San Antonio mall. But they refused to register the title, causing months of aggravation when FSLIC foreclosed on the boat a year later.

The yacht deal stinks, but it was hardly Dixon's only breach of banking law. Dixon and his officers constantly made insider loans to themselves and their cronies, including shady developers and other "go-go" thrift owners. They faked minutes for directors meetings, adding loans the board never approved. Occasionally they diverted the directors by providing prostitutes. According to a Justice Department indictment, up to twelve women, including two flown from Dallas, were paid to provide sexual favors during a three-day Vernon board meeting in San Diego in June 1985. When FSLIC finally took over Vernon in March 1987, it found that 96 percent of the loans were worthless, possibly a new world record. It ultimately cost the federal insurers $1.3 billion to clean up the mess.

Dixon didn't act alone in his misdeeds. Vernon's books are a catalogue of sleazy thrift-owners who sold each other bad loans to prettify their own balance sheets. (Loans are considered a bank or thrift's "assets." Banks and thrifts often sell shares, or "participations," in a loan to other in-

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stitutions to spread the risk. This practice is okay if the loan is basically sound, i.e., the borrower is paying it back. But the Dallas thrifts were passing around their garbage, giving the seller an influx of cash and the buyer a fresh asset that wouldn't start to smell for several months.)

"A list was circulated at a meeting," testified Vernon officer Gregory McCormick about one such cleanup. "Friendly lending institutions were thrown out on the table, or tabled as to who might take what and how much they may buy." Some of these "friendly institutions" had their own congressional friendships, neatly complementing Dixon's relations with Coelho. Thomas Gaubert, the big, bluff owner of Independent American Savings and Loan, had become close friends of Speaker Wright and his staff. Gaubert gave so much to Coelho's D-triple-C that he was named its finance chairman, and he harbored hopes of rising to national chairman of the Democratic party. Gaubert's thrift shared deals with Vernon, and he had free use of the *High Spirits*.

Dixon also did multi-million dollar Florida real estate deals with Raleigh Greene's Florida Federal Savings and Loan in St. Petersburg. Greene was best buddies with Rhode Island congressman Fernand J. St Germain, chairman of the House Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs. According to Brooks Jackson, who broke the story about their dealings, the two met when Greene was president of the National Savings and Loan League, the big-thrift trade association. Greene cut St Germain in on a number of Florida real estate deals. St Germain's staff lobbied the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (parent of FSLIC) to approve the conversion of Greene's thrift to a stock corporation, and St Germain subsequently bought 1,500 shares of the stock. Former Florida state regulators remember vividly the fawning treatment Greene received from FSLIC staff. (Both Greene and St Germain have fallen from grace. Rhode Island voters narrowly defeated St Germain in the 1988 election, and he is reportedly under renewed Justice Department investigation. Greene left Florida Federal after a series of massive losses, and the FBI and the U.S. Department of Education are now looking into the thrift's conduct of its student-loan program.)

Local connections had less glamour but they increased fund-raising prowess. Edwin T. McBirney, who shared $18 million of some Vernon stock loans, ran his Dallas-based Sunbelt Savings Association so recklessly that locals called it "Gunbelt." (In 1985, Gunbelt financed the purchase of eighty-four Rolls Royces, some painted with peacocks and geese, from the collection of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh at Rancho Rajneesh, Oregon.) The stock loans that Vernon shared with McBirney helped officers of NorthPark Savings Association in Richardson buy control of their institution.

These names show up on the records of East Texas First, a PAC organized by Thomas Gaubert for the sole purpose of beating the Republican candidate in the now famous 1985 special election in Texas's First Congressional District. The PAC raised nearly $100,000, tipping the vote narrowly to the Democrat, Jim Chapman, delighting Tony Coelho and helping Jim Wright win the Speakership. NorthPark officers contributed $7,000 so soon after their stock loan was refinanced that a prosecutor might ask whether there was some connection. (The Justice Department Task Force has already issued one indictment over East Texas First in mid-January, charging the president of a smaller thrift with illegally reimbursing his employees for their contributions to the PAC.)

Tony Coelho was a contradiction, engagingly open about his Campaign Committee yet willing to ignore legal restraints in accepting Dixon's help.

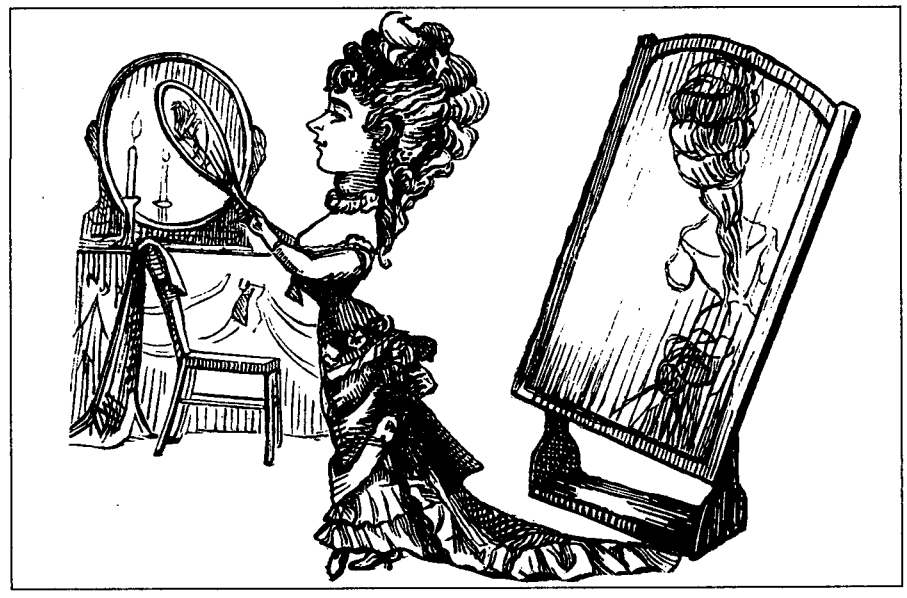
Ultimately, FSLIC took over both McBirney's Sunbelt and Gaubert's Independent American, with combined losses of nearly $2.8 billion. The network of loan swapping was so intricate that, rather than sort it out, FSLIC combined the two with six other thrifts and reopened them as a single new "phoenix."

But Dixon and Vernon had even more surprising clients. Vernon sank $13 million into projects with John Connally, former Texas governor, U.S. treasury secretary, and presidential candidate, and his protégé Ben Barnes, whose political career was wrecked in the Sharpstown bank scandal twenty years earlier. When Vernon tried to foreclose on the projects, Barnes and Connally warned "it was a bad business move because it ruins their business relationship." The thrift backed off.

Connally's relations with Vernon may have been the last stage in his descent into personal bankruptcy. But the thrift had even more lurid interests out of state, lending to California figures who had ruined thrifts up and down the West Coast. One, Jack Franks, managed the *High Spirits* partnership for a time. He also worked with developers in California who, according to a civil suit, once enforced a disadvantageous business deal by cracking the ribs of their negotiating partner. Franks has pled guilty to fraud charges in Texas and California. Vernon also lent money to a business partner of Morris Shenker, a St. Louis lawyer and Las Vegas casino owner who has figured in Mafia investigations for years. Shenker, formerly the lawyer for Jimmy Hoffa and the Teamsters Central States Pension Fund, has, however, never been convicted of a crime.

But the most curious character is a Shreveport, Louisiana, bank and insurance man named Herman K. Beebe. Now in jail on savings and loan fraud charges, Beebe is on his second generation of scandals. He was identified as a financier of the Texas "rent-a-bank" scheme of the early seventies, some of whose figures have emerged once more as owners of failing thrifts.

Much of the foregoing was uncovered by Allen Pusey of the *Dallas Morning News*. Pusey is a superb investigator who has done more than any other reporter to expose the S&L scandal, and he sees the "rent-a-bank" case of 1972 to 1976 as the blueprint for the present debacle. "The same schemes, the same problems and many of the same people," he writes. "A network of insider loans, self-dealing transactions and stock purchases . . . allowed them to float bad loans through the regulatory system." In the "rent-a-bank" system, eight investor groups controlled twenty banks, swapping control and lending each other large amounts they didn't bother to pay back.



Behind this network stood the peculiar Herman Beebe, a product of the central Louisiana pinelands, who controlled a network of banks, thrifts, and insurance companies. Pusey calls him a man of wry humor, who gave one daughter the name Easter Bunny Beebe. A constant worry to federal bank regulators and target of an unsuccessful task force, Beebe hired former Louisiana governors Edwin Edwards, a cajun Democrat, and David Treen, a hard-nosed Republican. The reputedly untouchable Treen acted briefly as Beebe's lawyer. Edwards received a retainer of $100,000 a year during the interval between his second and third terms as governor.

Beebe also acted as banker to Carlos Marcello, the legendary head of the New Orleans Mafia. (A congressional report singles out the 79-year-old Marcello as the most prestigious Cosa Nostra leader, partly because his "family" was the first to be established in the New World, in the 1890s.) At one point a Marcello associate tried to buy a bank from Beebe.

It's not clear that Marcello is deeply involved in the Texas thrift crisis, but Beebe certainly is. Pusey reports that Beebe gave Don Dixon his start, bankrolling his purchase of Vernon Savings and Loan. From 1981 on, the two were joint investors in real estate from Louisiana to California. Vernon financed some of the ventures, ultimately lending Beebe's companies at least $9 million. Beebe is now serving a year-and-a-day federal sentence for bank fraud in Louisiana, and has signed a plea agreement with the North Dallas task force on a separate five-year count.

This background puts quite a different slant on the savings and loan debacle. It's no longer the product of regional recession, or declining oil prices. The deregulations of the early 1980s played a role, but not necessarily the one argued by Reagan's critics. The root cause is the one singled out by the regulators—fraud and mismanagement. The Garn-St Germain

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Act of 1982 deregulated thrifts, broadening the range of their activities and making it easier for the wrong sort of developer and high roller to enter the industry. Further easing of rules in Texas and California gave them the power to make truly foolish investments. As a result, said former FSLIC General Counsel William K. Black in June 1987, the "staggering carnage" among fraudulent thrifts like "the Texas 40" explains "virtually all FSLIC's recent and pending major losses." Since Black spoke, the Texas 40 has grown to about 200 and FSLIC's losses have escalated from $20 billion to $70 billion and now possibly $100 billion. Or we should say since Black tried to speak. The remarks on fraud were prepared for a House Banking Committee hearing that then Chairman St Germain abruptly canceled when he learned what Black meant to say.

But there is fraud and fraud. Looting through sham loans and phoney expenses looks petty when compared to the grand con game that is keeping much of the financial system in business. This scam is based on the very nature of deposit insurance. Perhaps it is too gigantic even to be considered a crime.

The Bank Board has been struggling to close the one-third of the nation's thrifts that are now hopelessly insolvent; that's about 500. By stretching every line of credit to the outer limit, it plans somehow to deal with about 200 of them. It just doesn't have the money to do more.

In the meantime, the open but insolvent thrifts, the "living dead" as they are merrily called, are losing money at a rate of up to $30 million a day. The reason is that the insolvent thrifts are trying to stay open by expanding. As their loans default, they can't earn enough to cover the interest they pay their depositors. So they try to bolster their cash flow by attracting more depositors.

This is a classic Ponzi scheme, paying your older investors by suckering in new ones, and most people wouldn't fall for it for any number of toasters if it weren't for three things. One, bad thrifts offer the highest interest rates in the market. That's called a risk premium, or nowadays, a "Texas premium." Two, a national market has grown up in money brokers who package large deposits and chase high interest rates across the country. The worse off a thrift becomes, the more it depends on this "hot money." Three, it's all insured anyway, so what's the difference. One of the turning points to the S&L crisis may well have been the decision to raise federal deposit insurance to $100,000 an account, which made it feasible for the brokers to market "jumbo CDs" in that amount.

We owe this achievement to Chairman St Germain. In 1980, reports Brooks Jackson, the Senate had voted to raise the insurance level to $50,000. The House hadn't acted at all, so in conference committee St Germain "compromised" at $100,000. The ensuing boom in deposit brokering has attracted the ever alert financial scam community. One major player with some Texas thrifts has been the First United Fund Ltd. of Garden City, New York. Its leader, Mario Renda, apparently pioneered the technique of linking deposits to some reciprocal favor. Following earlier plea bargains in Florida and Kansas, he was recently convicted in the federal district court in Brooklyn on charges that he marketed money from several union welfare funds in return for kickbacks. A witness in one of his trials claimed, without corroboration, that Renda had bragged of handling money for Paul Castellano, late head of New York's Gambino crime family.

Even in legitimate hands, the brokering of large deposits perverts the original intent of federal deposit insurance, which was to protect the small saver but preserve market discipline on imprudent management. It's worth recalling that Franklin Delano Roosevelt opposed deposit insurance in 1933, on the grounds that sound institutions would wind up subsidizing the bad ones. This has now come to pass. And the more the rotten thrifts try to stay alive by expanding their deposit base, the greater the charge they leave for the deposit insurance corporation, and ultimately, the taxpayer.

As investigators pull at the strands of the Texas thrift crisis, they are unraveling a network of fraud and shady dealing far wider and older than anyone had suspected just a few months earlier.

The logical response would have been to close down the insolvent thrifts before they built up further claims on deposit insurance. But Congress made this impossible. Back in 1985, the Bank Board, the Treasury, and the White House began to plead for more money to recapitalize FSLIC. (In those days, the administration thought it would take $15 billion, to be raised by floating off-budget bonds backed by industry dues.) The industry fought the plan tooth and nail. The United States League of Savings Institutions and its ilk feared that FSLIC would use the money to close the most corrupt thrifts. Why the league clawed and scratched on behalf of the crooks rather than the honest thrifts or the depositors remains a mystery.

In the meantime, the Bank Board tightened its supervision. In 1986, Speaker Wright began to hear loud complaints from Coelho, Gaubert, Dixon, and his hometown thrifts about "draconian" meddling from federal examiners. The regulators were indeed beginning to catch up with high living and bad loans, but their response was still so feeble that the industry's complaints seem ludicrous in retrospect.

Look at the examiners' struggle with Vernon Savings and Loan. From the moment Dixon bought it in January 1982, Bank Board regulators were trying to control its lending. In August 1984, FSLIC slapped Vernon with a "supervisory agreement" to correct its sloppy loan procedures. But judging from FSLIC's fraud suit, and Vernon's own business records, these warnings didn't slow it down a step. From 1982 to 1986, Vernon's deposits grew from $80 million to nearly $1.6 billion, an increase of nearly 2,000 percent.

The Bank Board really got serious in early 1986, and shortly after, the *High Spirits* showed up on the Potomac. In April, a federal examination forced out Vernon's top officers (one of whom gave himself a $200,000 loan on the way out the door). Coelho started using the *High Spirits* in May.

In July, the Bank Board imposed a Cease and Desist order on Vernon after several months of negotiation. In September, Dixon's surviving board sought "voluntary supervision" by the Texas Commissioner of Savings and Loan Associations, hoping for a "less confined environment." In August and September, Coelho used Dixon's planes for trips to California. And now the shoe dropped. Speaker Wright started calling Bank Board Chairman Edwin Gray with personal attacks on the most able of the Bank Board examiners. He made his point by freezing the bill to recapitalize the insolvent FSLIC. Congress would spare no more than $5 billion.

Wright suddenly reversed himself in April 1987, when FSLIC brought a fraud suit against Vernon Savings and Don Dixon. The cars, the houses, even the text of "Gastronomique—Fantastique" were laid out in public view. But Coelho plunged ahead with the fight. In August 1987, Congress finally approved a recap of $10.8 billion in a bill laden with restrictions on the examiners. Estimates of the size of the problem had once more doubled.

As Congress scurries and postures on the thrift crisis, you may expect a great deal of indignation about everything but its real cause, the politicization of federal supervision. The underpaid, undertrained examiners will be scapegoats, even though their hands were tied by Congress. Representatives like the lightweight Charles Schumer will rant about the Bank Board's midnight deals to dispose of the "living dead." But the House denied FSLIC the money to do anything else. Rival regulators like the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (which insures commercial banks) will try to build an empire on the ruin of the thrifts, but the FDIC has gone through billion dollar failures itself. Its own insurance fund is under ominous pressure. Every regulator, bar none, is hiding a case in which higher-ups went easy on a crooked banker with high-level political connections. The FSLIC scandal just happens to be the hardest to conceal.

But the ultimate villains have their lairs in the House and Senate office buildings, and they do their work on the floor of Congress. With the exception of St Germain, they have been immune from judgment, and they will be for two more years. Will the thrift crisis finally arouse the voters? If it doesn't, it won't be the last. □

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AMONG THE INTELLECTUALOIDS

QUARK BITES

by Joe Queenan

It is generally agreed that Galileo was the last Catholic who really knew Science cold. It is no coincidence that he didn't go to parochial school. At the schools I attended—Our Lady of the Tramps, Holy Innocents Until Proven Guilty—there were no microscopes, no voltometers, no experimental infrastructure to speak of: Even the creatures we cut apart in biology class were *used* frogs.

What's more, the nuns and priests who ran our science classes actively discouraged our learning anything about the universe in which we lived. If you asked how God stopped the sun at the Battle of Jericho, they'd hit you. If you asked about evolution, they'd hit you. Eventually you got the message and stuck close to safe queries: what sort of seasoning the Iroquois used when they gnawed off St. Isaac Jogues's fingers; why fantasizing about a girl's skirt being three inches shorter was a venial sin, while fantasizing about it being six inches shorter was a mortal sin. This was not the way to get into MIT.

As a result of my formative experiences in this intellectual ghetto, I have spent much of my adult life trying to collage together some notion of how Reality works. This meant not only reading *Microbe Hunters* and *The Incredible Journey* but also watching dozens of David Attenborough's bizarre BBC specials, and devouring the four stories about the fate of the dinosaurs that appear in the *New York Times* each morning.

More recently, I have dipped into books such as James Glieck's *Chaos*, which covers The Butterfly Effect. The Butterfly Effect is the theory that an insect fluttering its wings in Peking could inadvertently set in motion a chain of events leading to an earthquake in Rio de Janeiro. It is also known as The Rozelle Effect; on the last weekend of the football season, a pass deflected by a Cleveland Brown tackle away from a Los Angeles Ram tight end could lead to a San Francisco 49ers backup quarterback facing an all-out blitz from a Minnesota Viking safety in a first-round playoff game in Candlestick instead of a second-round playoff game in Dallas. Of course, I am oversimplifying Glieck's book, just as I am oversimplifying the NFL's playoff system.

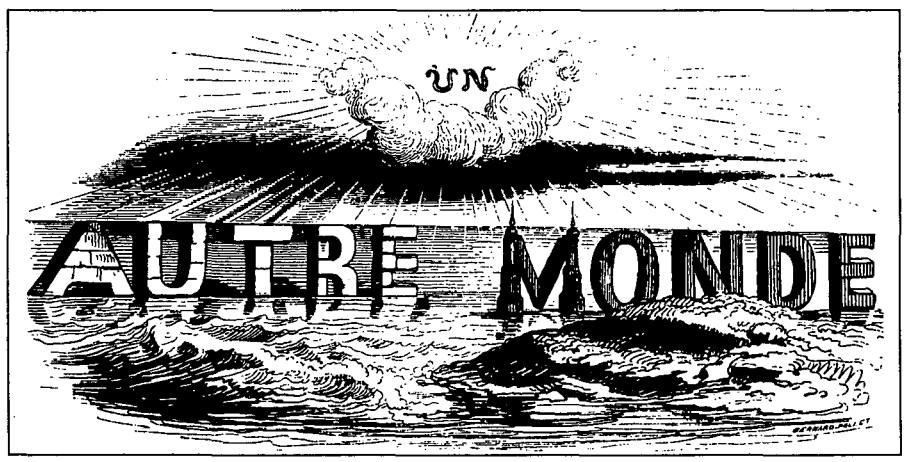
What made it possible to get through *Chaos* is the fact that the author is a journalist, and thus has to write lucid prose for a living. Scientists, on the other hand, only get paid to be smart for a living and are generally abysmal writers. This is why I've run into so many problems reading "popular" scientific works by actual scientists. A good example is *Frozen Star* by George Greenstein. This book, which came out in 1983, is described on its dust jacket as "a magnificent achievement in the history of popular science." This is not true. *Frozen Star* is a 274-page brain-buster about pulsars, black holes, and neutron stars that is incredibly hard to understand unless you went to Amherst, which is where Greenstein teaches astronomy. I don't object to Greenstein's writing books that are incredibly hard to understand, but I do resent being told that they aren't. Especially at $16.95 a pop.

An even better example of this phenomenon is *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes,* by Stephen W. Hawking. This is the book that everyone is talking about, presumably because the longer you talk about it, the longer you can put off actually reading it. Hawking is an admirable Englishman who has not allowed Lou Gehrig's disease to prevent him from becoming, if the bio on his book sleeve is to be believed, "the most brilliant theoretical physicist since Einstein." Seemingly, at some point in 1970, he and a colleague proved that the universe had to have an actual beginning in historical Time. Apparently the UPI didn't pick up on this item, because I missed it entirely.

Last year, Hawking unveiled what his publisher, Bantam, calls "a classic introduction to today's most important scientific ideas about the cosmos." Well, not quite. What he's actually written is a dreadful, boring, sloppy, incomprehensible book. His book isn't about black holes: It *is* a black hole. It is a profoundly unreadable 750-page doctoral thesis masquerading as a snappy, 198-page book that you could give to your mother. There are phone books out there that make more interesting reading than this. *Chinese* phone books. Just consider this passage of translucent clarity:

"We have no direct evidence as to whether the matter in other galaxies is made up of protons and neutrons or antiprotons and antineutrons, but it must be one or the other: There cannot be a mixture in a single galaxy because in that case we would again observe a lot of radiation from annihilations. We therefore believe that all galaxies are composed of quarks rather than antiquarks; it seems implausible that some galaxies should be matter and some antimatter."

Moving right along . . .



"All the known particles in the universe can be divided into two groups: particles of spin 1/2, which make up the matter in the universe, and particles of spin 0, 1, and 2, which, as we shall see, give rise to forces between the matter particles. The matter particles obey what is called Pauli's exclusion principle."

How does a book that is this atrocious get so much attention? Simple. This is an infinitely expanding universe. In an infinitely expanding universe there will be an infinite number of civilizations. Among that infinite number of civilizations there will be one in which an infinite number of people will believe the dumb blurbs that they read on the backs of an infinite number of books. *Ours* is that civilization.

Kurt Vonnegut once said that all modern art is a conspiracy between artists and rich people to make everyone else feel stupid. This is equally true of Science. Particularly irksome are the assumptions these guys make about how much a reader already knows about the universe before he opens the book that is supposed to teach him all the things he doesn't know about the universe. If I were writing a popular introduction to the stock market, I wouldn't assume that the average reader already knows why a price/earnings ratio of 24-1 is risky, why you can leverage $600 million capital into a $5 billion LBO, or what the expression "triple witching hour" means. But folks like Hawking throw around all kinds of facts and figures without any explanation whatsoever. As he writes:

"If we add up the masses of all the stars that we can see in our galaxy and other galaxies, the total is less than one-hundredth of the amount required to halt the expansion of the universe, even for the lowest estimate of the rate of expansion."

Can I see your paperwork on that, Steve? And while we're at it, where'd you cook up the estimate that the mere fact of a person having read your work

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Joe Queenan is a writer for Barron's.

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will "increase the disorder of the universe by about twenty million million million million units—or about ten million million million times the increase in order in your brain." Similarly, when you say that "a proton has an average life of greater than ten million million million million million years," or remark that "there are something like 10 million million million million million

their "need" for federal handouts). These developments *alone* would have been enough to attract the attention of politicians, some eager to pander to the public's concerns, others genuinely concerned to discover whether government action is required and, if so, what set of policies can be adopted. But, in addition, we had an election campaign. George Bush, undertaking the not-too-difficult task of exposing the real Michael Dukakis, hit upon the idea of touring the much-polluted Boston Harbor, exploiting Dukakis's lack of concern about environmental issues with a "photo op/TV bite" almost as devastating as that handed to him by a helmeted, tank-driving Dukakis.

Topping all this was widely publicized and truly alarming testimony before Congress by James Hansen, a respected atmospheric scientist with NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies. Hansen told a Senate subcommittee that his statistical analysis (Hansen is not a statistician) persuades him, first, that the earth has warmed in the past 100 years and, second, that the warming has been caused by an increase in carbon dioxide levels resulting primarily from increased burning of fossil fuels, chlorofluorocarbons from industry, nitrous oxides from automobiles, and methane in the gaseous effluvia from livestock. These gases trap heat that would otherwise escape to space through the earth's atmosphere. This causes the earth's atmosphere to warm, gradually but steadily and dangerously. The warming, some climatologists fear, could cause droughts and, by melting the polar ice cap, cause the sea level to rise several feet, inundating many coastal areas.

Advocates of almost every cause found that "public alarm about the environment is surging again," as the respected *Economist* magazine put it. So they hitched their old wagons to this new star. Those who have always favored such environmentally "correct" causes as conservation, solar energy, and wind power hopped on the bandwagon: unless something is done, and soon, to promote their favorite energy source, the earth will warm, with disastrous consequences. Not to be outdone, their onetime enemies in the nuclear power camp agreed that the so-called greenhouse effect could devastate the planet, and suggested a new wave of construction of the nuclear plants that they have always known would provide an inexhaustible supply of safe, clean energy.

Unfortunately, solar power, by the estimates of its own advocates, is five times as expensive as energy from fossil fuels. And nuclear plants have already bankrupted one utility (Public Service Company of New Hampshire) and threaten to do the same to several others. Clearly, private enterprise will not willingly hurl itself into the breach that would be created by mandated cutbacks in the use of coal and oil. So we need either massive government subsidies, or direct participation by the government in the energy industries—or in other programs, such as one undertaken recently by Los Angeles. That city, so short of resources that it cannot care for its homeless or hire enough police to crack down on crack, has launched a program to plant between two and five million carbon dioxide-absorbing trees. This, despite the city's inability to estimate the cost of maintaining the new trees, and despite the fact that most of the one million trees planted to beautify Los Angeles for the 1984 Summer Olympic Games have since died for lack of proper care.

Serious policymakers, of course, know better than to panic in the face of increased pressure from purveyors of old nostrums. But they know, too, that it is easy and quite often wrong to pooh-pooh problems merely because they are not yet visible to the untutored eye. So several questions need answering. The first, of course, is whether the earth is indeed warming. Hansen says his data show that between 1880 and 1980 temperatures rose by 0.6 degrees centigrade. Others say 0.5 degrees. But Andrew Solow, a statistician at the prestigious Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, ascribes about 0.2 degrees of the increase, whatever it might be, to the fact that some rural areas that housed measuring stations have become increasingly urbanized—and therefore hotter. And S. Fred Singer, an atmospheric scientist and professor emeritus of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia, argues that there is no clear upward trend in temperatures over the past one hundred years. The data do show a rise of about 0.6 degrees between 1880 and 1940, followed by a decline between 1940 and 1965. This was followed by a decade of generally stable temperatures, and a sudden warming since 1975, "too short a period to discern a trend," in his view.

In sum, the evidence that there is a global warming trend is at best ambiguous. Even shakier is evidence on the cause-and-effect relationship between the use of fossil fuels and any warming that may have occurred. After all, most of the warming took place before 1940, when fossil fuel use was relatively low; use rose sharply during the following twenty-five years, when average temperatures were dropping.

Finally, we know even less about the effect of temperature changes on climate (rainfall, tides, and so on) and less still about the need to forestall gradual changes in climate, if such changes are occurring. Harvard's Thomas Schelling points out that even under the worst assumptions, "most people will not undergo in the next hundred years changes in climate that people have undergone during the past hundred years. No climate changes are forecast that compare with moving from Boston to Irvine, California, or even perhaps from Irvine to Los Angeles."

What does all this tell us about the future direction of sensible policy? A few hazy guidelines emerge.

First, keep the issue in perspective. There is a powerful, worldwide group of intellectuals opposed to economic growth. Some of its number are Luddites, hankering for the simplicity and, they think, the healthy environment of pre-industrial societies. Others genuinely believe that population and economic growth threatens an ambiguously defined "quality of life" by putting pressure on the earth's resource base. This movement had its last flowering as the Club of Rome. That group's

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report was very effective: it dominated Jimmy Carter's thinking, causing him to prefer to keep warm by shearing sheep (to manufacture sweaters) rather than by pumping oil. The Club of Rome had elaborate models that "proved" that unchecked economic growth would deplete the earth's resources—a proof offered immediately before the emergence of gluts in oil, coal, gas, and other fuels. The current emphasis on a possible greenhouse effect is in the Club of Rome tradition, and has enlisted many of its shock troops.

Second, stay calm. We don't yet know enough to warrant costly international programs that do not, *for other reasons*, make sense. If we can conserve energy more cheaply than we can produce it, we should. If solar proves cheaper than burning coal, use solar. And include in these cost comparisons the estimated cost of any environmental resources consumed in production.

Third, keep costs in mind. Schelling estimates that phasing in a one-third cutback in fossil fuel consumption in the U.S. over twenty years would cost about $150-$250 billion (at today's prices) and reduce worldwide emissions by less than 10 percent. The question is not, "Should we reduce fossil fuel use?" Rather, we should ask, "Is it worth it? Will the cutback affect temperatures and climates? And if it does, is that more desirable than permitting the changes to occur, or than developing other strategies to modify weather?"

Fourth, continue efforts to improve the efficiency with which energy markets work. If energy consumption is subsidized, as it is by tax breaks to energy producers, or by use of government funds for waste disposal, consumers will think energy is cheaper than it really is; prices will understate costs, and consumption will be artificially encouraged. And if importers of oil continue to impose costs on society—supply interruption and defense costs—that those importers do not bear, we will import and burn too much foreign oil. An oil import fee would correct this underpricing.

Fifth, don't ignore the possible problem. Instead, devise and fund a research strategy that will increase our too-sketchy knowledge of what is happening to the world's climate, what is causing those changes, and how we might develop least-cost strategies for preventing *or* adapting to those changes.

Above all, keep in mind that we are a lot better off than we were a few years ago. Between 1970 and 1986, particulate emissions declined 64 percent, carbon monoxide 38 percent, sulfur oxides 29 percent, ocean dumping of industrial waste 94 percent, and the miles of river unfit for swimming 44 percent. (Data from Environmental Protection Agency and state agencies, reported in *Fortune*, *Time*'s stablemate.)

Continued progress in all these aspects of environmental preservation is desirable, of course—but only if based on sound science and with an eye to the fact that in this field, as in others, there is no free lunch. We have to decide what other programs we are prepared to curtail to liberate more resources for further improvement in environmental amenities. This decision might be made more calmly if we keep this in mind: 1988, despite its hot summer, was a colder-than-average year! □

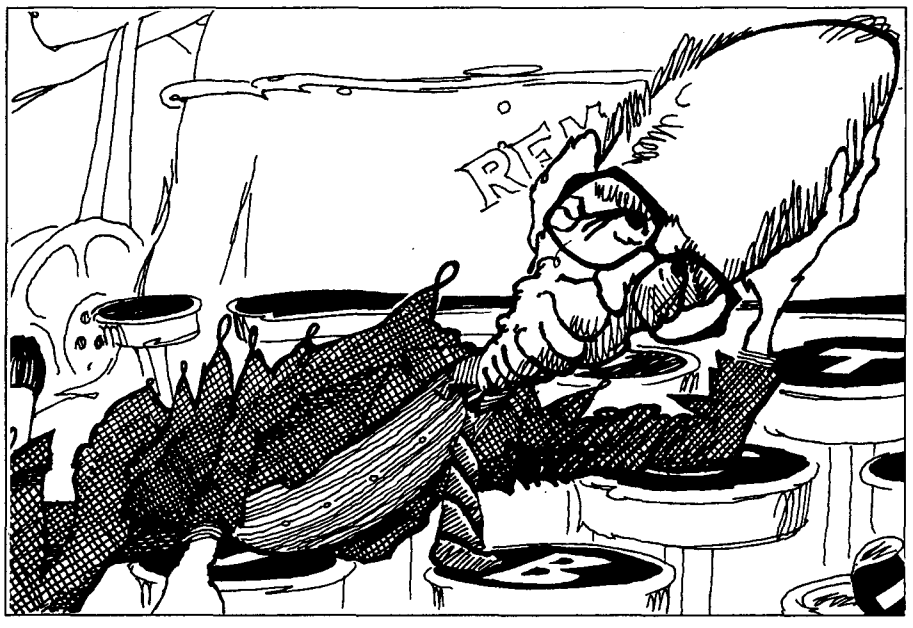
PRESSWATCH

ANDROGYNY AND DR. BRODER

by Terry Eastland

In a speech at the National Press Club last November, the *Washington Post*'s David Broder decried "the blurring of the lines" between journalism, on the one hand, and politics and government on the other. The two endeavors should be kept separate, he said, but in recent years "a new hybrid creature" has appeared, "an androgynous blending of politician and journalist called The Washington Insider." This creature labors for a while as a public official or political operative before doing journalism, or perhaps he does journalism first and government second. In any event, the door often revolves more than once, with the politician-turned-journalist returning to politics or government, and the journalist-turned-official going back to journalism. Broder did not name, but did unmistakably describe, some of these creatures: Hodding Carter, Leslie Gelb, Pat Buchanan, Carl Rowan, Henry Grunwald, Mark Shields, George F. Will, and John McLaughlin. (My parents will be pleased to learn that I, too, am androgynous, having gone from journalism to government and back again, at least to this column.) Broder said he has "a little list" of Insiders and, in his speech accepting the Press Club's "Fourth Estate Award for lifetime distinction in journalism," commented that "they never will be missed."

Broder concluded his remarks by discussing accountability. Voters can always vote out the politicians who displease them, he said, but they have "no such recourse against us in the press." "We" in the media "enjoy a privilege" because "the Founders of this nation took a gamble that a free press—even when it is irresponsible and unprofessional—is a healthy check on government." If we are to defend that privilege, "we damn well better make it clear we are not part of government, and not part of a Washington Insiders clique where politicians, publicists, and journalists are easily interchangeable parts." Indeed, unless "we" remain "outsiders," "we" will "lose our freedom."



On December 4 the *Post* published the relevant text of the speech as well as a piece titled "Tainted Journalists" by ombudsman Richard Harwood, who actually named names (Christopher Matthews, Hendrik Hertzberg, David Burke, David Gergen, Bill Moyers, Tom Johnson, Diane Sawyer, Jody Powell, John Chancellor, Jack Rosenthal, among others) while expressing his agreement with Broder. "The incessant bed-hopping" between politics and journalism is "doing damage to the image of independence we cultivate and cherish," concluded Harwood. Shortly thereafter, *New York Times* columnist William Safire wittily disagreed with the Broder-Harwood view, noting how government service can enhance a journalist's understanding of officialdom. In their syndicated columns, Carl Rowan and Pat Buchanan also filed strong-worded dissenting opinions. So, on the back page of the *New Republic*, did a non-Insider, Morton Kondracke. In early January the *Post*'s Charles Trueheart wrote a lengthy piece in the Style section reporting and analyzing the views of various Insiders and Outsiders.

Terry Eastland is resident scholar at the National Legal Center for the Public Interest.

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Finally, on January 11, Broder, who makes part of his living reporting news, revolved through the newsroom door to the editorial office, where he took up the issue again in his syndicated column. While acknowledging that government experience does not necessarily diminish the quality of journalism, Broder stuck by his guns.

Introducing what might be called the argument from function, he said politicians package things, while journalists question things. For this reason, media independence and integrity are "best preserved" if "the tone of journalism—including commentary—is set by those who are never too certain of the exclusive wisdom of their own viewpoint." Broder also invoked the First Amendment, which, he wrote, "gave journalists a special immunity from government regulation and placed us outside the system of checks and balances . . . because the Founders believed that a free press, even if fallible, would be a healthy check on government." Broder also noted that a judge had written him as to how the revolving-door controversy "parallels the separation-of-powers issues now so often litigated." Our democracy, the judge wrote Broder, "depends largely on the integrity of our system of both formal and informal checks and balances," and "any unnecessary or excessive confusion of roles is dangerous to the institutions and individuals involved." Broder took this as a useful "warning we in the press need to hear and heed," and chided door-revolved journalists for being "thin-skinned" and failing to question "the pattern of which they're a part." After all, true journalists question things.

Only in Washington, capital of politics, journalism, and the United States, could such a discussion occur, not to mention the bed-hopping that has resulted in the androgynous creatures Broder finds to his horror in the Fourth Estate. Even so, it's nice to see media opposition to promiscuity, however defined, and it's interesting to discover that not just Richard Nixon but David Broder keeps lists of journalists.

Broder is wrong about a lot, yet he does have a point: Coziness between politicians and journalists can corrupt journalism—but only when it is defined in Broder's terms. Because news reporting of mainstream media today represents itself as Broder-like—skeptical, questioning, independent—the coziness Broder decries can damage the image of this kind of journalism, if not its substance.

Broder's point applies with much less force to opinion journalism, which is political though not partisan (at least not obviously). Opinion journalism ought to be political. And when it offers a variety of strongly expressed and deeply held views, it's making its finest public contribution. Because few opinion journalists represent themselves as apolitical, independent commentators, I am skeptical as to how concerned readers are about coziness between a politician or government official and a columnist. But when it has become a problem, the public has proved itself quite capable of making discriminating judgments. George Reedy notes in *The Twilight of the Presidency* that the column written by William S. White, a close friend of LBJ's, lost readers during the Johnson presidency and then gained them back after 1968. "People started to read him for what *he* was saying," wrote Reedy, "rather than for what they thought the *president* was saying."

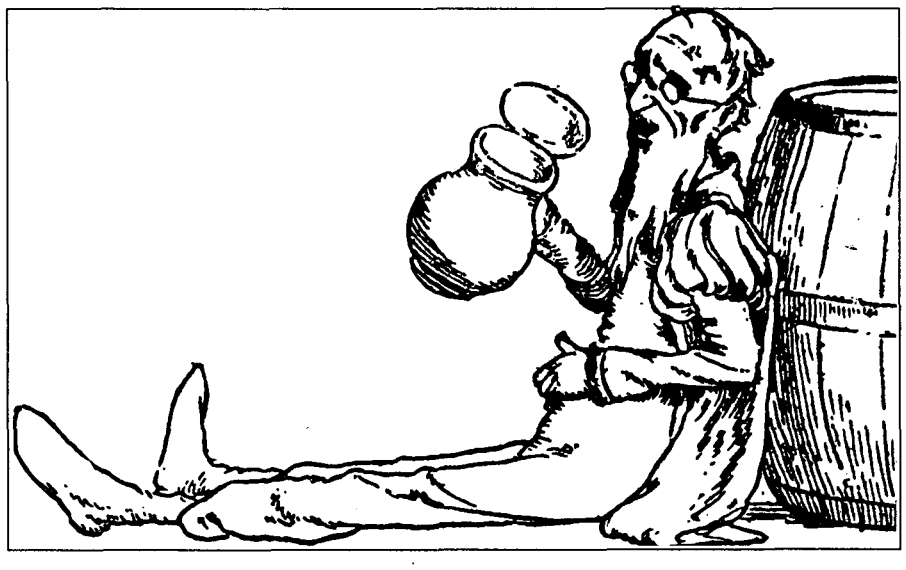
As for the door between journalism and politics, Broder takes passage through it as conclusive evidence of coziness. That's a mistake. Coziness can grow in that passageway, but it need not, and in any event it can grow in many other places. All over Washington there are non-revolved reporters who have friends in politics and government. Do they protect political friends when they write stories involving them? Or do they in effect recuse themselves from those stories and let other reporters write them? And whatever they do, do these journalists advise politicians? What do they say on the squash court or at the McPherson Grill—or even in the West Wing of the White House? In *Right From the Beginning*, Pat Buchanan notes that some members of the White House press corps—and they were non-revolved types—encouraged him to run for president. The fact is, integrity is where you find it, and the issue is whether you abide by the contemporary standards of the position you're in, whether it's in government or journalism.

Given the aspiration of news reporting to be thoroughly independent, I think it's harder to move from government to that kind of journalism, if for no other reason than image. It's easier to move from government to opinion journalism, since both lines of work involve expression of political views. In any event, prudence argues that whatever you do, do one or the other, not both at the same time.

This happens to be the proposition for which the dictum of Broder's judge actually provides analogical support. Under the Constitution, you can't hold office in more than one branch of government at any one time. But the Constitution does assume that you can work in more than one branch, so long as you do so at different times. Consider Article I, Section 6: "No person holding any office under the United States shall be a member of either house *during his continuance in office.*" (Emphasis is mine.)

Broder assumes the Founders intended his kind of journalism—the Outsider kind—to be a sort of fourth branch of government, unelected by but still accountable to the people. He should have questioned that. Whether or not the Founders intended journalism to be that kind of fourth branch, they certainly did not intend that the journalism be Broder's variety. Reviewing two media books in the January 9 & 16 issue of the *New Republic*, Nicholas Lemann observes that it is "ahistorical to have [the Founders] spinning in their graves over the work of big, reportorial, nonpartisan organizations that they never dreamed would exist."

And what did exist? What did the Founders support? Consider the story of Messrs. Fenno and Freneau. In 1789, at the urging of Federalist leaders, John Fenno established an administration newspaper, the *Gazette of the United States*, in the capital city of New York. Fenno was cozy with, among others, Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton, who also contributed to the paper. But Thomas Jefferson, secretary of state at the time and the man often sainted by some modern journalists as an advocate of freedom of their kind of press, didn't like the Federalist *Gazette*. So he worked with James Madison to bring Philip Freneau to Philadelphia (now the seat of government, to which Fenno had also moved) to start a rival partisan newspaper, the *National Gazette*. And get this: Jefferson hired Freneau as a State Department translator! (The job paid and required little, giving Freneau enough time to publish.) Smarting from Freneau's attacks, Hamilton wrote an anonymous letter in the Federalist *Gazette*, questioning the ethics of a newspaper's "vilifying" an administration from which its editor received a salary. Hamilton was right to raise that question, yet as historian C. Vann Woodward has written, both Hamilton and Jefferson "habitually supported" the kind of journalism that prevailed at the time, which plainly was partisan.



Broder's view of opinion journalism is worth noting. He says the tone of such journalism should be set by people like himself, who "came up" in the business and are, by virtue of that background, "never too certain of the exclusive wisdom of their own viewpoint." But it is not necessary to come up in the business to have such an attitude. The most famous op-ed pieces in American history—tone-setters indeed!—were the *Federalist* papers written by Messrs. Madison, Hamilton, and Jay, political men of strong views who did not think of themselves as exclusively wise.

One of the great preoccupations of modern journalism is governmental conflicts of interest. So it's not surprising that journalism itself should now be scrutinized for its own conflicts. Broder's speech basically goes to this end, and his point about coziness deserves notice. But in wanting to rid the Fourth Estate of those awful androgynous creatures and leave it to his own kind, Broder has adopted a priestly role in which he defines what journalism should be, using the royal "we" and fitting sacred history and principle to suit his ends. That's where the arrogance lies.

But perhaps more interesting is whether Broder is speaking for a class of journalists whose influence both within the business and upon the nation is diminishing. To put it differently: Will journalism become more "Outsider"? Or, especially given television's influence, will journalism become more and more a mixed bag of outsiders, insiders, inbetweeners, and all sorts of creatures who are unclassifiable but who have views to express, under protection of the First Amendment? The smart money is on the latter. □

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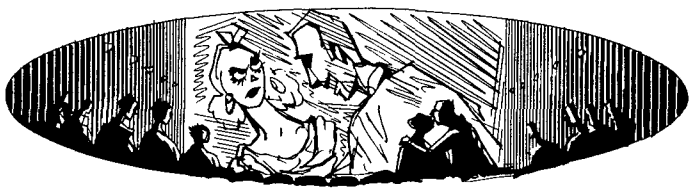
THE TALKIES



THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT

by Bruce Bawer

Winter has brought with it a blizzard of widely heralded new films, the most lauded of which is probably *The Accidental Tourist*, directed by Lawrence Kasdan from a script by Kasdan and Frank Galati. Based on a novel by Anne Tyler, this movie—which reunites William Hurt and Kathleen Turner, the stars of *Body Heat*—has been called "perfect," "a triumph," and "one of the best movies in many years," and was cited as Best Picture of the Year by the New York Film Critics' Circle. The night I went to see it, New York had been hit by a snowstorm and traffic was almost at a standstill; nonetheless, the two large adjoining Upper East Side theaters in which *The Accidental Tourist* was playing had both sold out an hour and a half early, and though it was only nine o'clock I had to buy a ticket for the 11:45 showing. Now, when you get crowds like that on a snowy night in Manhattan for a non-Woody Allen movie, you know you're in the presence of something special—namely, The Prestige Film of the Year, the latest answer to *Amadeus*, *On Golden Pond*, and *Gandhi*, the movie-to-beat at the Academy Awards.

Of course, Prestige Film doesn't necessarily mean Bad Film, and there was no reason not to expect that at least some of the critical encomia were justified. Yet *The Accidental Tourist* proved to be a first-rate disappointment—an incredibly lifeless and programmatic concoction, the most solemnly dull award-winner since *Chariots of Fire*. What pretension! Hurt plays a middle-aged Baltimorean named Macon Leary, author of a series of travel guides for on-the-go businessmen who want to visit "the most exotic places in the world without feeling they'd left home." Want to know which hotel in London has the best plumbing? where to find a Burger King in Paris? Leary's books have the answers. Always take a book with you on an airplane flight, he advises, so as to avoid being bothered by your seatmate. His guidebooks speak to the most banal, unadventurous side of the business traveler, and we are meant to understand this as a metaphor for his approach to life in general. For he moves through life like an accidental tourist, doing his best to avoid contact with other lives, to evade new experiences, to cushion his somber and solitary progress through the world.

In part, this *Lebensart* is a family trait. Macon's aging, unmarried sister and brothers—who live together in the family manse—are all anal retentives who spend their time alphabetizing groceries and road maps, and who get lost if they wander so much as a block off their usual neighborhood routes. Unlike his siblings, Macon *is* married, but since the sudden, shocking, recent death of his 12-year-old son, he has reverted to type: his wife, Sarah (Kathleen Turner), has left him, and he's moved back in with his pathetic, eccentric clan.

In other hands, this material might have been truly affecting. But there isn't much to get attached to in Hurt's Macon. He plods across the screen like Frankenstein's monster, his face pale and eyes dead, and delivers every line in the same robotic monotone. "There's something so muffled about the way you experience things," Sarah complains. Alas, in seeking to convey this quality, Hurt has muffled his very expressivity. Watching him, one has increased respect for the late Peter Sellers, who in *Being There* took an equally numb, shambling, and matter-of-fact character and made him truly affecting. Hurt's Macon, by contrast, is uncompelling, a cipher.

And all the people around him—excepting the ever-natural Sarah—are utterly bizarre. The grotesques in Flannery O'Connor and Carson McCullers have nothing on this bunch. Seated in the family parlor, the Learys look as if they're awaiting an appointment with Diane Arbus. The jobs here are invariably goofy: Macon's brother Charles makes bottlecaps for a living. ("It's not half as exciting as it sounds," he tells Macon's publisher.) Weirdest of all is Muriel Pritchett (Geena Davis), a young obedience trainer for dogs, who is inexplicably attracted to Macon. The film's attitude toward these folks is schizophrenic: it feigns compassion even as it ridicules them, making (for example) a cruel running joke out of the numerous and exotic allergies of Muriel's small son, Alexander.

It would be an exaggeration to describe this film as having a plot. The development seems random, pointless: first Macon ignores Muriel's attentions; then she manipulates him into a relationship; then Sarah talks him into a reconciliation. In the end, he picks one woman over the other, because "she's given me another chance to decide who I am—to step out of the Leary groove and stay out." Why does Macon suddenly achieve this sense of resolution? No apparent reason. Why does he feel that this woman more than the other would help him to escape his rut? Beats me. "It's a mistake," he declares, "to plan everything as if it were a business trip"—and this feeble insight is actually meant to constitute an epiphany, a profound moment of truth. It's almost embarrassing to sit in the theater and realize that one has been taken on so long a journey for so little. Macon is like nobody one has ever known, and the "lesson" he ultimately learns is one at which the filmmakers have been tiresomely hammering away since the opening frames.

Synthetic as it is, though, this movie *looks* profound. A composition in brown and gray, it's lugubriously paced and equipped with a solemn, self-important John Williams score; the actors have the serious air of TV stars doing an Arthur Miller play on PBS. All this may well be more than enough to convince the Academy voters, come spring, that *The Accidental Tourist* is a worthy successor to *Terms of Endearment*.

(continued on page 32)

Bruce Bawer is The American Spectator*'s movie reviewer.*

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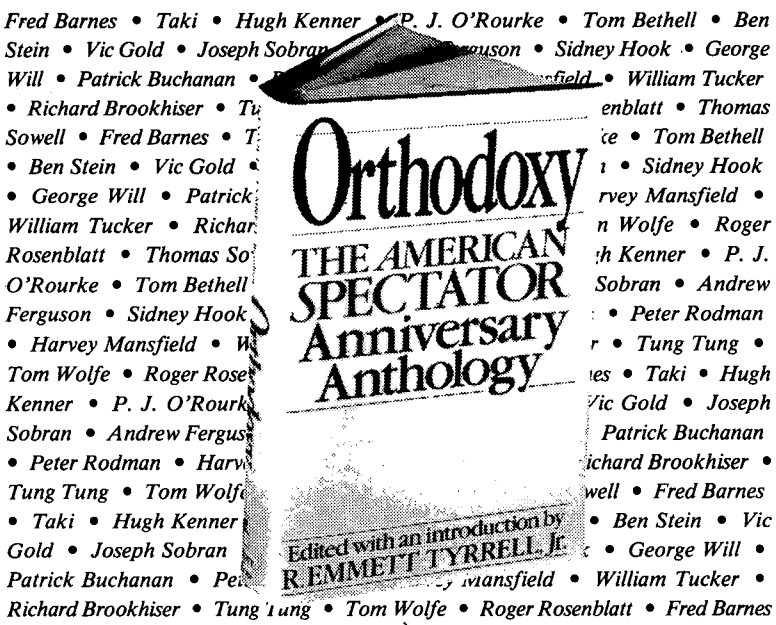
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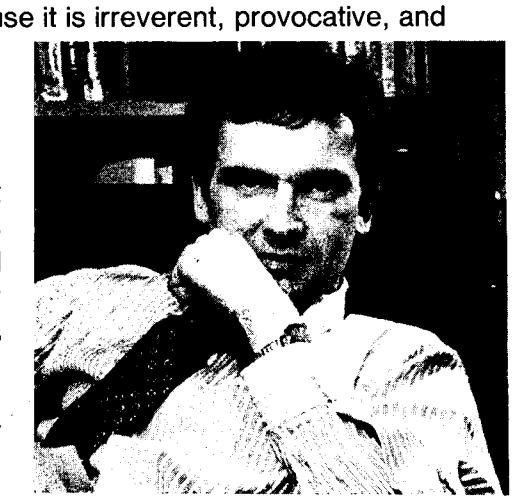

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Speaking of which, they've been comparing Bette Midler's new picture, *Beaches*, to *Terms of Endearment*. Up to a point, it's a valid comparison: like *Terms*, *Beaches* follows a relationship through its ups and downs, from childhood to an early death, and was directed by a man (Garry Marshall, in this case) who is famous for his TV sitcoms. But Midler's movie feels realer, truer than Shirley MacLaine's. And whereas *Terms* gave us a mother and daughter, *Beaches* presents us with two women, C. C. Bloom (Midler) and Hillary Whitney (Barbara Hershey), who meet on the beach in Atlantic City as 11-year-old children and remain best friends for thirty years. They're as different as can be: Hillary, a proper little rich girl from a San Francisco suburb, ends up attending Stanford and becoming a high-profile lawyer; C. C., a brash kid from the Bronx with dreams of showbiz success, goes on to spend years singing in shabby nightclubs and acting in off-off-Broadway plays before finally becoming a star. But they're united by their fascination with each other: C. C. is awed by Hillary's preppie-ish way of life; Hillary envies C. C. her talent and determination. At various points over the years, the two women room together, fall for the same man, become estranged; both of them lose direction (and husbands), and each helps the other get back on track.

It could be argued that the film (written by Mary Agnes Donoghue) contains too many episodes, and that they are too loosely strung together. But the two women's performances are wonderful, their chemistry is perfect, and the way their lives develop and intersect has a naturalness about it that is very engaging and, in the end, astonishingly tender. Hershey is lovelier and more *simpática* than ever, and Midler is superlative at every turn—funny, touching, and in great voice. Yes, the film has major weaknesses, among them a maddening series of false endings, and a loud, idiotic rock song that almost ruins the film's moving climax. For all this, however, it's extremely gratifying to see a contemporary film that's set over a long period of time, and that regards friendship and its attendant responsibilities with sympathy and respect.

• • •

Like *Beaches*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* makes use of an "odd-couple" pairing. But that's where the similarity ends. *Scoundrels* is a farce of prelapsarian wit and elegance. Michael Caine plays an adroit, sophisticated English con man named Laurence Jamieson, who routinely takes wealthy ladies for millions in a Riviera resort town; Steve Martin plays a slovenly American named Freddy Benson, a small-time operator who tries to crowd his turf but who, finding himself outclassed, blackmails Jamieson into teaching him (as Robert Redford does Paul Newman in *The Sting*) how to pull off The Big Con. When school's over, though, Benson refuses to leave town. So they make a wager: whoever can bed the pretty young heiress Janet Colgate (Glenne Headly) can stay; the other must go. You can see the dénouement coming all the way down the Riviera, but the fun is in watching it work itself out. The screenwriters (Dale Launer, Stanley Shapiro, and Paul Henning) keep things moving deftly from reversal to reversal; Caine and Martin never stray from character, and Frank Oz's direction (though it could be tauter) never loses its light, charming touch. It's a top-notch contrivance.

• • •

In *Talk Radio*, Eric Bogosian brings new meaning to the word obnoxious. Bogosian—a New York "performance artist" who, with director Oliver Stone, adapted the film from his off-Broadway play—stars as Barry Champlain, the host of "Night Talk," an infamous radio phone-in show in Dallas, Texas. Champlain is an opinionated loudmouth. "This country," he declaims, "is in deep trouble, people!" And the only hope for a solution would seem to lie in his show. "It's the last neighborhood in town!" he insists. "People just don't talk to each other anymore!" He's at once paranoid, messianic, apocalyptic. "This show is about saying what's got to be said!" he screams into his mike, and mostly the movie consists of his doing just that: arguing with bigots, talking down would-be suicides, ranting about everything from drugs to the Holocaust.

Bogosian's character has been compared to so-called shock-jock Howard Stern (whose morning radio show is heard in New York, Philadelphia, and Washington), but though Bogosian seems to have copped a few of Stern's trademark gags, there's no real similarity. Stern's a comic who puts down his own program and the pretensions of radio people; Champlain takes himself more seriously than Jerry Falwell. Stern is a pro with a natural-sounding delivery; Champlain (as we learn from a clumsy flashback) is a former suit salesman who got into showbiz because a radio deejay walked into his store one day and said, "You've got quite a voice. You ever do radio?" Quite a voice, indeed! It's one of those slick, phony-from-the-word-go radio voices, and it makes everything Champlain says sound utterly insincere (an effect that would seem to be unintentional, since this is how Bogosian really talks).

Needless to say, the salesman-to-superstar flashback is hard to buy. So is a scene at a basketball game (one of the few episodes set outside the radio studio), where Champlain—supposedly a ratings king—is booed by the entire audience. (What's even more unconvincing is that he seems astonished by the reception: Doesn't he know how the city feels about him?) So is the way the KGAB management treats Champlain—not telling him about a syndication deal, for instance, until three days before it takes effect. (Who's his agent?) So is the fact that practically every other caller is a rabid anti-Semite. And so, finally, is the film's gruesome conclusion—which cynically rips off the sensational demise of real-life Denver deejay Alan Berg, for no better reason than that this feebly plotted, dreadfully stagey talkfest has to wind up *somehow*.

Talk Radio is desperate to make a point. But what is it? Champlain talks endlessly about America—yet his message amounts to little more than a garbled replay of Peter Finch's "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore!" spiel in *Network*. Forget about America, though—Stone and Bogosian don't even have a halfway intelligent take on their central character. "The most important thing," Champlain's ex-wife tells him, "is you've got to start loving yourself!" That's about as deep as this movie goes. Only KGAB's station manager appears to have the picture in focus. "All you are," he tells Champlain, "is a f-----g suit salesman with a big mouth." Amen. □

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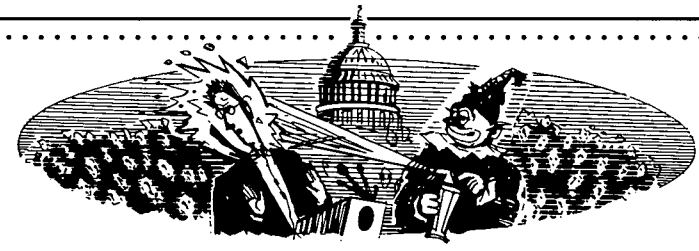

BUSH BASH

by Andrew Ferguson

The *Washington Post* inaugurated George Bush's inaugural week with a suitable gesture: a long piece called "Inaugural Kitsch: Goodbye To All That," by Sidney Blumenthal, the Hildy Johnson who patrols the right-wing beat for the paper. Many conservatives harbor a deep animus toward Blumenthal, and it's true that his work is routinely chock-a-block with factual errors, unfalsifiable assertions, deep-thinking allusions to TV culture, and all the other weapons of the neolib arsenal. But a more fruitful approach to Sid's work would be: Leave all that aside, and think of his *politesse*. Think of his decorous refusal to engage the enemy on the battleground of actuality and common experience. Admire his feints against imaginary flanks, and his furious broadsides aimed toward regions where no adversary crouches.

In high dudgeon, for example, he is apt to accuse conservatives of heartlessness, but then gently backs off, refusing to be so cruel as to cite examples. He announces, with deep indignation, that Ronald Reagan promised "to make us feel good," though of course such a promise never passed the President's lips. And as a man of deep aesthetic sensibility, he accuses conservatives of not nurturing artists worthy of the New Deal legacy of such left-wing stalwarts as Ben Shahn and Clifford Odets—an accusation by which any conservative can only be rendered speechless.

His work, in other words, reveals him to be a pacifist in the war of words, straining heroically—at the cost of achieving a reputation as a notable social critic or even as a competent reporter—to avoid hitting a target and causing blood to be spilled. I see him, therefore, as a peaceable man, a man of principle, and to conservatives startled by the smoke and spark of his relentless volley of blanks, my advice is: Be still, and know that he is Sid.

Which is not to say that he isn't a booby. The gravamen of Sid's inauguration article—published by the *Post* as a kind of warning to its readers—was that "inaugurations and their accompanying ceremonies are the harbingers of an administration's style," and that the ceremonies accompanying George Bush's inauguration were going to be "derivative of the show that was staged for Ronald Reagan on his own opening night." This, says Sid, should be cause for trepidation among freethinkers, for "the line between fantasy and reality was constantly blurred that night"—blurred so decisively, indeed, that Sid has trouble distinguishing between the two to this day. Wealthy people, Sid notes, attended the event—people in limousines—and so did Frank Sinatra. "Style was substance," he writes, "fashion was power"; to which we can add, borrowing Sid's syllogistic certitude, that substance was fashion, style was power, power was substance, and—most tellingly—style was fashion.

Hefty words! And, compatible with their author's generosity, utterly empty. I attended several of George Bush's inaugural events during those stirring days in late January, and I'm happy to say I saw no reason for trepidation. Not that things were uniformly rosy—certainly not uniformly tasteful. In his dud salvo Sid was referring, in particular, to the Inaugural Gala, which is not to be confused with the Inaugural Festival, the Inaugural Pageant, the Inaugural Forum, the Inaugural Dinner, or the Inaugural Ball. The Gala, unlike the other events, was televised for the nation to see.

And perhaps that was the first mistake. This 200th inaugural, its promoters constantly claimed, was supposed to be "for all the people," but it's hard to imagine all the people—any of the people, really—having warm and fuzzy feelings about their next President after watching the Gala on the tube. I wasn't able to watch the thing live, but I got hold of a videotape, and when I had some spare time I waded into it as far as I could. There to greet the President-elect was Walter Cronkite, figure of bipartisan rectitude, who recently told another gala—this one sponsored by People for the American Way—that George Bush had run one of the most "sophisticated and cynical campaigns ever." (Maybe his appearance at the Inaugural Gala was the Bush people's way of thanking him for calling them sophisticated.) Then I saw Nell Carter, who danced but shouldn't have, and then a group of precocious pre-teen fiddle players who made you wonder whether child abuse isn't a two-way street. And finally, when the wispy Tommy Tune was joined on stage by Brian Boitano, I feared the whole show might collapse from a shortage of hormones. I fast-forwarded to Cheryl Ladd, but even she couldn't save the evening.

The opening ceremony at the Lincoln Memorial, which I did manage to attend, suffered from some of the same problems. With the SWAT team perched watchfully on the roof of the temple, the master of ceremonies, Willard Scott, first introduced the Gatlin Brothers, who were followed by the Beach Boys, who were followed by that unspeakable collection of teenage hopeheads, "Up With People." UWP claims to be "dedicated to peace through understanding among young people of all nations," but the only feelings they inspire in the young people I respect, as they prance and leap and grin and make mysterious gestures with their flailing arms, is a violent, physical rage, checked only by a debilitating nausea.

These are the acts who show up at Super Bowl half-times, Olympic celebrations, and suchlike extravaganzas, and who event-planners, especially if they're middle-aged Republicans, seem to agree *everyone* enjoys. In fact almost nobody does. This is a colossal misunderstanding, similar to the one that for decades caused people to send fruitcakes to friends and relatives for Christmas, in the erroneous belief that everyone enjoys fruitcake. Fruitcake sales, after years of tireless effort on the part of concerned friends and relatives, are finally declining. That mistake was corrected, and this one can be too.

Now, I'm sure that a social critic of Blumenthalian scope could draw some large (huge) lessons from the banality of the inaugural entertainment—some intricate argument concerning the relationships among illusion and political reality and wealth and class stratification and the technology of mass media, bolstered by allusions to obscure poets of the French Symbolist school, Clement Greenberg, and Ricky Ricardo—and doubtless Sid is pounding out something along those lines even as I write. But I will demur, and point out that the truly worrisome aspect of the celebrations, for this Bush partisan, had nothing to do with entertainment. At the Lincoln Memorial event, to "illustrate the President-elect's 'points of light' concept," most of the crowd were given tiny flashlights, and at the end of Bush's brief remarks, sure enough, they were asked to turn them on. And they did. The instructions stopped there, however, and no one—least of all the Bushes and the Quayles, who stood with all eyes upon them—quite knew what to do with his own personal point of battery-operated light. Some in the crowd waved them lamely, others held them aloft, and some, in embarrassment, turned them off at once and put them back in their pockets.

"A thousand points of light" was a political hack phrase—more poetic and

(continued on page 48)

Andrew Ferguson is assistant managing editor of The American Spectator.

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BOOK REVIEWS

CITY FOR SALE: ED KOCH AND THE BETRAYAL OF NEW YORK

Jack Newfield and Wayne Barrett/Harper & Row/$22.50

Thomas Mallon

Eleven years after first taking office as Mayor of the City of New York, Edward I. Koch's greatest political asset remains the fact that he is not John V. Lindsay. He has undergone a physical transformation from loud bald stringbean to loud bald muffin ("Not bald, bald*ing*," Koch insists), and he seems less happy, but he is no less smart. "I am not a crook," said Nixon, and no one believed him. "I am not a *schmuck*," said Koch, several years ago, and no one doubted it. Probably because the well-intentioned John Lindsay *was* such a . . . well, let's say he was dumb. And the city remembers it. If you counted up the dollars stolen by every commissioner, inspector, borough president, and county leader during Koch's time in office, I doubt they would meet the sum required for one month's worth of pension checks being mailed out to those retired city workers lucky enough to have had their union leaders negotiating with Lindsay twenty years ago. It was not the needs of the poor that bankrupted New York; it was a newly middle class of municipal workers—who finally voted against Lindsay, anyway.[1]

Whatever the dangers of moral relativism, this reality, which Jack Newfield and Wayne Barrett never discuss, should be kept in mind throughout any reading of *City for Sale*, as should what the authors state on page three: "Koch . . . restored the city's credit in the bond markets, reduced its debt service from 17 to 9 percent, and paid back the federal loans a year ahead of schedule. In 1975, the city had a $1.8 billion debt; a decade later Koch had managed to produce a budget surplus." With such trivial accomplishments and the mayor's personal honesty acknowledged (the fish doesn't rot from the *very* top), the authors—long-time *Village Voice* writers, though Newfield is now deputy city editor of the *New York Daily News*—are free to spend their 455 pages of text trying to stifle Eddie the Lip. Lest anyone think this book is written with even a glint of objectivity, let me quote Jack Newfield's New Year's wish from a recent issue of the *West Side Spirit*, a local paper: "What I'm looking forward to in 1989 is what I've been looking forward to for the last eleven years. I want to hear Ed Koch say the following quote: 'Tonight I have sent a telegram congratulating my opponent on his victory.' "

They were once friends, back in the days when Koch was considered a liberal. Most people outside New York would still consider Koch a liberal, but things are different here. (Favoring decentralization of the school system, for example, is the *left* position in New York.) Sometime in the 1970s, when Koch began to make aggressive sense about issues like the death penalty, he became in Greenwich Village politics the equivalent of a capitalist roader who had veered off from the Long March in a Mercedes. Newfield and Barrett say, "Koch was not bothered by the fact that the mayor had no jurisdiction over capital punishment, nor power to institute such a policy . . ." True enough; but then why do "reform" Democrats running for city council seats always have foreign policies? That's how politics go here.

What Koch's most liberal opponents really dislike is anyone's success and victory, and throughout his first two terms they had to snarl and writhe as the deviationist in Gracie Mansion had a wonderful time, gleefully kvetching the city into new life and confidence. He so confused them that they can no longer recall what the man himself was like long ago. On page 107, Newfield and Barrett write: "A former law partner remembers Koch as having had the perfect personality for acrimonious divorces—'vengeful, punitive, thriving on personalized conflict, even if it was vicarious.' "[2] At the top of the following page, Adlai Stevenson is said to have had an "elegant purity that appealed to intellectuals, and to young idealists like Ed Koch."

Koch is indeed a less merry man—at least in his public appearances—than he was a decade ago. But it is also true that he is sometimes held to a ridiculous standard of civility. Newfield and Barrett refer to his "orgy of verbal assaults on Jesse Jackson," including the time when, here in Hymietown, Koch told the Jews they would have to be "crazy" to vote for Jackson. Calling someone "crazy" in this city, where every transaction is an incipient confrontation, is about as severe as calling somebody "sugar" in Mississippi. And, of course, if any of the Democratic candidates had said blacks would have to be "crazy" to vote Republican, no one's ears would have suffered in the slightest. But Koch is denounced. The authors also refer to the mayor's "flip attacks on beggars": I think they mean his suggestion that New Yorkers give what they can spare to charitable institutions rather than panhandlers, so they can be sure it goes for blankets instead of crack.

None of the above is meant to suggest that there isn't material to fill a book about corruption under Koch. His third administration has brought predictable "revelations" of all sorts of financial fraud, perpetrated mostly by or through party leaders he disdained in his early career and embraced during his mayoralty. Why Koch became so friendly with Brooklyn's Meade Esposito and the Bronx's Stanley Friedman and Queens's Donald Manes, allowing their soldiers to assume jobs with lots of potential for payoffs and kickbacks, can probably be explained by a triangle of factors: everybody's agreement that Chicago ran better than New York; Koch's own gubernatorial ambitions; and, perhaps, some sort of desire on the part of the gawky bachelor weenie, the Village do-gooder, to feel, finally, like one of the boys.

There's no question Koch read the bosses wrong. He hardly expected Manes, the Queens borough president, to be at the head of a scheme (along with his quack psychoanalyst, Geoffrey Lindenauer) to make a fortune in bribes out of running the city's Parking Violations Bureau. Lindenauer would finally testify against Stanley Friedman, the Bronx borough president who had another piece of the action; in the end he wasn't needed against Manes, who managed to kill himself on the second try. The operation involved characters who were friends of the supposedly worldly-wise Jimmy Breslin. A couple of years before the scandal broke, the columnist had even given a eulogy for one of the bagmen at a funeral home on Queens Boulevard. But, according to Newfield and Barrett: "[Breslin] went into a titanic rage when he found out that friends he thought were amusing rascals had crossed the shadow line behind his back and become 'scum gangsters stealing from the people of

Thomas Mallon is the author of Arts and Sciences *and other books. He lives in the Manhattan congressional district once represented by Ed Koch and John Lindsay.*

[1]See William E. Simon, *A Time for Truth* (1978).

[2]There is no footnote citation for this—or anything else—in *City for Sale*.

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my city.' " If Breslin (who once ran for city council president on a nightmare ticket with Norman Mailer) didn't know, how was Koch supposed to?

Scheme after scheme, scam after scam, Newfield and Barrett lay them out in detail that proves more numbing than outraging. They try to make *City for Sale* a story of quiescent newspapers turned once again crusading, with a lot of puffing of Newfield's new employer, the *News*, but the two of them don't seem to understand the way the tabloids, where everyone is encountered on a screaming first name basis, tame stories as soon as they inflame them. Even the principals in the Steinberg child-killing case are "Joel" and "Hedda" in New York, referred to as such not just by headlines but by TV reporters doing live remotes.

The most vivid moments in the book come from surveillance tapes and trial transcripts. When FBI agents come to question Rep. Mario Biaggi about the Florida vacation he and his mistress were treated to by Brooklyn's Meade Esposito, Biaggi calls Esposito so they can get their stories straight. He tries not to say anything incriminating into a phone he correctly surmises is bugged. But the 78-year-old Esposito doesn't get it:

BIAGGI: Listen to me, listen to me. This is serious. . . . All, all of this. And that's why you invited me down to the Spa. You're my host.
ESPOSITO: Of course. When do you want to go down?
BIAGGI: No, I did that. . . . You know my friend Barbara Barlow.
ESPOSITO: Sure.
BIAGGI: Remember her name. What's her name?
ESPOSITO: Barbara Barlow.
BIAGGI: Right. You knew her before?
ESPOSITO: I met her before.
BIAGGI: Right.
ESPOSITO: This sounds like a fuckin' grand jury.

The authors' very best material is of course The Bess Mess, the story of how Bess Myerson, Miss America '45 and Koch's cultural affairs commissioner, supposedly tried to get the aging Justice Hortense Gabel to lower the alimony payments for Myerson's mob-connected lover, Andy Capasso, by getting the judge's daughter, Sukhreet, a city job.[3] Newfield and Barrett manage to stack even this ridiculous deck against Koch, describing Sukhreet Gabel as "a self-absorbed intellectual who spoke five languages and had completed studies for a Ph.D. in race relations at the University of Chicago. But she was emotionally fragile." In fact, she's what the mayor used to like to call a "wacko"—a publicity glutton who testified against her own mother and, while the trial was still going on, sang a couple of numbers one night at El Morocco. Bess was acquitted, and while everyone thinks she's guilty, they're glad she got off because she's had a terrible time with men and is, in fact, a fairly serious wacko herself.

Newfield and Barrett acknowledge their editor, Rick Kot, for his "surgically sensitive" work. Actually, I wouldn't let Mr. Kot operate on my grocery list. *City for Sale* is full of vulgarity and solecism. From page one: "Ed Koch, three weeks past his sixty-first birthday, was the king of this singular city-state that was the finance, media, and creative-energy mecca of the planet." (One can almost hear Robin Leach: "BUT BEHOIND THE GLITTA . . .") Political and cultural clichés compete with one another for space, both of them struggling against co-authorial redundancies ("The final serene and optimistic peroration," "the close friend she and the mayor shared in common"). Two sentences compete to be my favorite. From Chapter Four: "The Depression made the Koch family downwardly mobile." And from Chapter Ten: "The Mafia has never issued a printed organizational chart like the Ford Foundation, or a published roster like the New York Mets." In case you think this last one is an attempt at humor, you should know that it is followed by the solemn words: "It is a secret society."

But understatement is rarely the authors' chosen key. They are usually performing madly melodramatic duets: "The beast had almost as many lives as the mayor had shameful memories; each hidden blot seemed determined to be found." Koch "lay in his oversized bed"—*lonely*—taking "his bunker mentality" with him to the office. In fact, Koch has about as much of a bunker mentality as Jessica Hahn. He holds so many press conferences that the local stations have trouble keeping him off the air.

Like the mayor's rule, *City for Sale* goes on and on. There's crooked "leasing czar" Alex Liberman; venal Taxi Commissioner Jay Turoff; sleazy Transportation Commissioner Tony Ameruso. That's certainly more than the city should have had to endure, but it is probably also more than a reader will want to take. Newfield and Barrett earn a certain amount of admiration for their unrelentingness (just as U. S. Attorney Rudolph Giuliani, who's now quoted in ads for the book, has earned theirs), but the back-and-forth narrative they grind out becomes impossible to take in, in any comprehensive way.

And the authors never back up from it. At the beginning of the book they mention AIDS, crack, and homelessness—the still burgeoning municipal disasters of the third Koch term, but they never come back to them, somehow expecting us to concentrate on Friedman and Manes and Esposito to their complete exclusion. This is impossible, since no one has ever considered these felons—either seen them in the paper or watched them on TV—without those things being on the facing page or the next graphic. People in this city, for all their quick temper, have a high threshold of genuine outrage. It is quite possible the scandals won't be much of a factor in this year's mayoral election. By September (unless Giuliani runs as a Republican, the Democratic primary will be the election), no one will have forgotten the name Joel Steinberg; most people already couldn't tell you who Stanley Friedman is. This doesn't show a taste for the lurid so much as a sense of humane proportion, mercifully still intact.

The authors offer some witty epigraphs for their book, among them Gibbon's statement that "Corruption is the most infallible symptom of constitutional liberty." Having offered it, why not meditate on such a statement? Or even on lesser questions, like whether state and federal governments are inherently cleaner than municipal ones? But all we get is a kind of higher meaninglessness: "The crime rate among ordinary people in the poorest neighborhoods of New York—Seventy-ninth Precinct in Bedford-Stuyvesant, the Forty-eighth Precinct in the Bronx—is *one per hundred.* Among the county leaders of the Democratic organization in this one-party city, that rate had become *fifty per hundred.*" The authors might as well mention that on some streets of Bedford-Stuyvesant

[3]Myerson had helped get Koch elected in 1977 by appearing with him everywhere—even on a campaign poster—in "The Immaculate Deception," media-meister David Garth's attempt to get around rumors that Koch was gay.

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no one has been convicted of improper conduct during a leveraged buyout, whereas probably a *couple* of people from Rye will be! What's the point? Every sleuth knows you have to look for both opportunity and motive, and every theologian knows that God distributes the first much less evenly than the second.

The Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data for *City for Sale* gives its primary subject classification as "New York (N.Y.)—Politics and government—1951—." Why 1951 is chosen as a watershed is a bit perplexing, but one thing that occurred that year is the testimony of former mayor William O'Dwyer (who had resigned and hotfooted it to an ambassadorship in Mexico the previous year) before a Senate rackets committee. The little tin boxes never stop jingling, but Newfield and Barrett quote Jimmy Breslin, after he'd figured out his friends, writing in his column that "this is the scandal of our time, and from now on I will bring it to you first . . ." This only adds self-importance to chagrin. Even the *New York Times*, endorsing Koch for a third term before the scandals broke, must have known there was a man-bites-dog quality to their statement that Koch "has hired first-rate officials, provided honest government, and greatly improved municipal management." If events proved them a bit sappy, how much less so than Newfield and Barrett, who refer to the "sacking of a government." If every such episode in New York's history were called by that name, then most new administrations would be stealing the ashes of the last one. For all the massive if underdocumented research Newfield and Barrett put into their book, they end up being guilty, on some level, of that thing more contemptible to people here than anything else: naiveté. The occasional *faux*-profound remark ("Yet like so many others who seek and seize worldly power, Donald Manes had a dark side") is hardly enough to get to the real bottom of doings like this in a city lived in and loved by many people, myself included, mostly for the way it excludes all nature but the human kind. □

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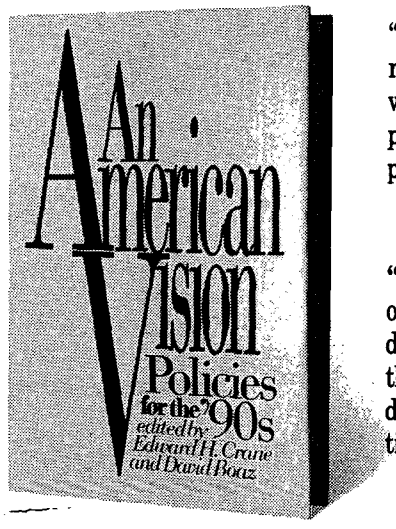

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THE LIMITS OF SOCIAL POLICY
Nathan Glazer/Harvard University Press/$22.50

Michael Novak

"Let me characterize the dominant view of the day (still the dominant view, I would say, among liberals)," Nathan Glazer writes near the beginning of his new book, *The Limits of Social Policy*. The "progressive, if jerky, improvement" that high capitalism brought to the world piled new inequalities of wealth, power, and status on top of the inequalities left over from the pre-industrial era. These inequalities shocked progressives—that is, those characterized by a "developing social conscience," who turned to the state to ameliorate these "evil and dangerous" inequalities. Northwestern Europe took the lead and the U.S. lagged behind, at least until JFK and LBJ began "to show Europe a thing or two" about community participation.

In brief, to get to "the essence of the liberal view of social problems" is to see that its typical stance is

> blame—not of course of the unfortunates suffering from the social problem the social policy is designed to remove, but blame rather of our society and our political system. The liberal stance is: for every problem there is a policy, and even if the problem is new, the social system and polity must be indicted for failing to tackle it earlier.

Guilt, then, and complaisance—guilt for not having acted earlier against the injustices that were after all always there, but also complaisance, because our forebears weren't advanced enough to recognize or act on them at all.

Nonetheless, toward the end of the 1960s Glazer derived from his experiences "with social policy and not at all from reading any theorist or social philosopher" a disturbing insight, namely,

> that we seemed to be creating as many problems as we were solving and that the reasons were inherent in the way we—liberals, but also the moderate conservatives of the day (recall that they were such people as Richard Nixon and Nelson Rockefeller)—thought about social problems and social policy.

Beginning here, Glazer's book guides nonprofessionals through the history, presuppositions, and some of the experiments of "progressive" public policy makers during the past quarter-century.

Glazer's insight led him to a new point of view, which he summarizes in two propositions:

> 1. In our social policies we are trying to deal with the breakdown of traditional ways of handling distress. These traditional ways are located in the family primarily, but also in the ethnic group, the neighborhood, the church.
> 2. In our efforts to deal with the breakdown of these traditional structures, our social policies are weakening them further and making matters in some important respects worse. We are making no steady headway against a sea of misery. Our efforts to deal with distress are themselves increasing distress.

Glazer is unsparing in pointing out the ways this happens.

It is rare to find a practitioner (Glazer participated in the Kennedy Administration as an urban sociologist in the Housing and Home Finance Agency in 1962-63) and theorist with courage sufficient to question the assumptions of his profession. In the best sense of the word, Glazer has maintained a liberal, self-questioning spirit, open to actual experience and results. He has avoided being "liberal" in the worst sense; he does not merely dismiss "conservatives" as immoral, nor act in a wholly ideological way. On the contrary.

Back in 1971, Glazer published in *Commentary* an earlier version of his title essay, "The Limits of Social Policy." It made a deep impression on me then and is more powerful in its new revision. The other nine essays in this book mostly date from the 1980s, of which three see print for the first time. Virtually all are concerned with various aspects of family welfare policy. Some—such as "Crisis and Redirection in Social Policy" and "The American Welfare State: Incomplete or Different?"—were first presented before an international audience and in an international context.

Glazer's capacity for sympathy is broad; he has been a leader among scholars concerned with grasping

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nuances of ethnicity, religion, and other particularities of individual communities. But he is at his best when he faces data that oblige him to look again at his earlier assumptions. It troubles him (in "Why Isn't There More Equality?") that philosophers appear to hold a view of equality of income quite different from that of the American people. It troubles him that many social thinkers hold that America's welfare system is simply an incomplete and rather unprogressive version of "more advanced" European welfare states; whereas evidence indicates that the American model operates on distinctively American ideals and purposes. Finally, it troubles him that a huge and largely unrecognized battle over values is being fought out in excessive darkness; a battle between those who insist on "a radical and egalitarian individualism" and those who defend "mediating structures," that is, the complex of local institutions and social roles that incorporate authority (perhaps religious) and tradition into daily life. Glazer worries that, despite the attention the second side seems to have received from social scientists in the last two decades, the first side is winning. The utterly predictable consequence is that "rights undermine roles." And if that continues, "the hope that social policy will assist in creating more harmonious social relations, better working social institutions, broadly accepted as the decent and right way to order society, cannot be realized."

There are so many informative passages and finely wrought sentences in Glazer's essays that the temptation is to quote and quote. Yet Glazer's work needs to be considered in a deeper way, for he operates close to the edges of philosophy, deals with basic assumptions, and pushes against existing "horizons" (the limits of questions currently being asked) more insistently than he looks into the detail of particular problems or proposes new technical solutions. All of this is important; indeed, I wouldn't be surprised to find him publishing one day a fuller philosophical statement on an American approach to social policy. The future outlines of such a work are already hinted at here. Two of his lines of thought deserve special mention.

Part way through Chapter One, Glazer adumbrates a new "solution," although what he suggests is more in the nature of an "approach." "Some important part of the solution to our social problems lies in traditional practices and traditional restraints." Since the past is not recoverable (he writes—perhaps too quickly), his new approach offers, minimally, two forms of guidance: first, it counsels hesitation in the development of social policies that sanction the abandonment of traditional practices, and second, and perhaps more helpful, it suggests that the creation and building of new traditions, or new versions of old traditions, must be taken more seriously as a requirement of social policy itself.

The first line of thought, then, is to give up a pillar of the conventional wisdom in social policy; i.e., that for every social problem there is a policy. In its stead, Glazer favors a more modest respect for human nature as it has been revealed in our civilization's social history, for tradition, and for the lived complexity of actual social communities in all their fruitful diversity. There is in Glazer much Burkean modesty, little of the hubris of those who see (or once saw) no limits to the malleability of human societies in the hands of all-wise engineers and molders of utopian results. Further, it is not only human recalcitrance that impresses him but also the remarkably diverse sets of rules and practices, restraints and habits that human beings in their various communities have evolved from harsh experience. It is as if Glazer sees human liberty not as something unconstrained, but rather as *ordered* liberty, shaped to diverse social necessities. Since social responses are devised by emerging social intelligence (usually gained the hard way) his counsel is respect for such intelligence, even when tacit or inarticulate, rather than randomly tearing it asunder without replacement. "Make haste slowly," in other words, being careful to supply new strengths for any taken away.

The second line of thought concerns both the throwaway clause mentioned above, "since the past is not recoverable," and the distinctively American idea of social order, progress, and purpose. The American framers were painfully aware of their originality; "the *new* order of the ages," they boasted. In *Federalist 14*, Madison stresses this originality and Tocqueville nearly a half-century later fully appreciated it. "American exceptionalism," therefore, was no accident; it was, indeed, a historical *defi*, a challenge, an experiment, an act of perilous defiance. Whereas the history of progressive social thinking is mainly European both in its origins and in its measure of what is more "advanced" and what is "laggard," as Glazer reports, the Americans had quite different ideas.

Indeed, the American framers understood "revolution" to mean something quite different from what the French and other Europeans later understood it to mean (in 1789, 1848, and so on). The Americans thought of revolution in the ancient classical way, as a *révolvere*, a turning back to first principles. To be sure, the Americans thought that these first principles were "self-evident," rooted in the conditions necessary for the full expression of "natural liberty." While they by no means thought that these principles were then "self-evident" to all peoples, they had reason to believe that trial and error would make them so, as history advanced and nations awakened. (That is the force of *seclorum* "of the ages," in the *"new order."*)

In a word, Glazer's chapter on the uniqueness of American social policy deserves fuller development. The fundamental perplexity for the framers 200 years ago—and for social science today—is how to meet *two* requirements: How can there be a progressive, ever fuller achievement of the common good of a whole people—that is to say, the achievement of an ordered, civilized, and dynamic *society*? And simultaneously, how can there also be full and unprecedented respect for *personal* rights, liberties, and fulfillment of responsibilities? (These are the "two sides" Glazer discerns currently at war in American social thought and practice.)

Europeans have tended to stress the "social"; Americans, although much more aware of the social than Europeans tend to think, see far more clearly the crucial role to be played by the full exercise of personal liberties in any social order worthy of human nature. "The God who gave us life gave us liberty," Thomas Jefferson insisted. The "system of natural liberty" implies at once both liberty and system.

Indeed, the United States just now is rife with experiments and fresh thinking about uniquely American emphases: about incentives for individual effort, about responsibilities as well as rights, and about that coincidence of personal responsibility and participation in the civic and communal good that Tocqueville called "Self-Interest Rightly Understood." The primal pioneer experience, after all, was building community: not only building new villages, new towns, new cities, and new states, but also building them around luminous new principles of personal responsibility and personal involvement. Whereas European social instincts tend to operate top-down, from social plans and national programs to needy individuals, American social instincts tend to inspire individual citizens (who might not share the same religious or ethnic visions) to build communities bottom-up. Glazer, on the evidence of these collected essays, is poised to formulate a new beginning for American social thought more in keeping with the American founding, and also more respectful of lessons learned first in America and now coming to the fore internationally.

In a not dissimilar spirit, a book by Stuart Butler and Anna Kondratas, *Out of the Poverty Trap* (Free Press, 1987), covers in its eight chapters much of the same ground as Glazer's does: "Why the War on Poverty is Being Lost," "Rebuilding America's Communities," "Welfare and the Family," "Better Education for the Poor," "Advancing the Agenda." True enough, Glazer is working within the dominant liberal tradition in American social policy, whereas Butler and Kondratas have a major chapter called "The Foundations of a Conservative Welfare System." Nonetheless, like Glazer's, their sympathies are broad and their respect for ethnicity, religion, and family are similar to his. The appearance of both books, and others like them, gives promise of a new era of cross-fertilization and innovation, within a new "horizon" of questions now seen by all to be unavoidable: Why have we failed? How can we do better? Where can we find new and more fruitful starting places? The owl of social philosophy is again in flight. □

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FAMILY QUESTIONS: REFLECTIONS ON THE AMERICAN SOCIAL CRISIS
Allan C. Carlson/Transaction Books/$34.95

THE FAMILY WAGE: WORK, GENDER, AND CHILDREN IN THE MODERN ECONOMY
Bryce Christensen, Allan C. Carlson, Maris Vinovskis, Richard Vedder, and Jean Bethke Elstain
The Rockford Institute/$9.95 paper

For several years now, Allan Carlson has been one of the best-kept secrets of the conservative community. Working out of the Rockford Institute in Illinois, Carlson has been publishing a series of minor masterpieces in *Persuasion at Work*, the institute's monthly newsletter. Aficionados of this powerful publication (now co-written with Bryce Christensen and retitled *The Family in America*) have awaited its arrival with the same enthusiasm usually reserved for a magazine like—well, *The American Spectator.*

Carlson has testified before Congress, made it into the rolodex of the *New York Times*, and is frequently given "observer" status at liberal powwows on poverty and family issues. But he has been unknown to the broader public.

That may be about to change. With the publication of these two books, Carlson emerges as one of the most profoundly sensible voices on the American landscape. More than anyone else, he seems capable of articulating exactly what it is the American people are saying when they pull the lever for Ronald Reagan or George Bush, election after election.

Carlson is a foursquare defender of mainstream American values—home, family, and religion. He extends the list to include childbearing, sexual modesty, the suburbs, churchgoing, common decency, and so on. What makes Carlson so different is that he is not simply preaching or expounding noble sentiments. All his positions are carefully laid out and supported by meticulous research and precise reasoning; his forte is scholarship, a mastery of the literature ranging through history, sociology, philosophy, and psychology. From the speeches of Theodore Roosevelt and the works of St. Augustine to the writings of some obscure nineteenth-century reformer—Carlson brings them together into an exciting panorama of intellectual history.

Who would have known, for example, that shopping malls were first introduced into America as a *socialist* vision by Austrian architect Victor Grün, who wanted to provide "crystallization points for suburbia's community life," after concluding that capitalism had ruined the cities? Or who could anticipate Carlson's defense of these same malls as revivals of medieval manors, where the ability to defend private property has prevented publicly used spaces from being invaded by the wackos and derelicts who have used their constitutional rights to overrun airports and bus terminals? Malls, concludes Carlson, are widely embraced precisely because they are "havens for a normal, relatively decent life amidst the ruins of the postliberal, postdemocratic" society.

As another example of Carlson's dialectic, take his gloss on the "Ageism Scam." During the early seventies, Carlson notes, a whole literature suddenly appeared chronicling the injustices allegedly suffered by America's older people. Here was yet another persecuted minority, subject to disrespect, treated with callous neglect, discriminated against, and in need of the intervention of the welfare state. One polemicist complained that Pepsi-Cola's jingle, "You've got a lot to live and Pepsi's got a lot to give," was "ageist" because it reminded older people that they didn't have much longer to live.

The result, of course, was the usual cranking into gear of the bureaucracy. Conferences were held, directives issued, niceties of language prescribed—the whole bouquet of liberal thought-control, based on the premise that whatever the advantages or disadvantages of aging, they were all the product of other people's minds. Not incidentally, the Social Security system was simultaneously transformed from a modest pension plan (the maximum payroll deduction in 1965 was $174) into a runaway entitlement (the deduction for a $30,000 self-employed person is now over $3,000).

What is most fascinating, Carlson points out, is that none of the brouhaha about ageism was based on the slightest shred of evidence. No proselytizer of ageism ever took the trouble to interview elderly people and gather proof of actual grievances. Thus when researchers finally started surveying social attitudes toward the elderly, they found them almost the opposite of what the apostles of ageism were proclaiming. The elderly, it turns out, are widely respected throughout the country. They are not ghettoized or discriminated against in housing (in fact, they are usually preferred as tenants). Certainly, they are forced into retirement by Social Security laws, but in exempted categories they hold their own and better. The elderly are strongly represented in state legislatures and exercise more influence over local communities than does any other age group. Rather than fretting about prejudice and discrimination, they are mainly concerned with lax courts and escalating crime.

Nor are the elderly in dire economic straits. They are commonly overrepresented on the poverty rolls, but only because poverty statistics grossly overestimate their housing costs: two-thirds of the population over age 65 lives in homes owned free and clear, while only one-fifth of other adults do. Indeed, by 1980, twice as many elderly parents reported giving financial support to their grown children as reported receiving support from them.

Nevertheless, the "ageism scam" was not without consequence. As Carlson points out, the growing socialization of care for the elderly through government pensions has created perverse incentives leading to a precipitously declining birth rate, both in this country and in Europe. One of the most common reasons people have had children, he notes, is that grown children are generally considered a potential means of support in old age. With the socialization of care for the elderly, however, people have discovered they can live off *other people's* children. They can have smaller families, or no children at all, saving themselves the enormous expense of childrearing while still remaining secure in their old age.

As a result, birth rates in countries with comprehensive old-age pensions have dropped far below zero population growth. West Germany, Austria, and Sweden are reproducing at only 60-70 percent of replacement level. The same trend is occurring in middle-class America, but is masked by immigration and high reproductive rates among the poor. Much of our current prosperity, says Carlson, comes from "consuming [our] ghost children."

Is Carlson exaggerating? It might seem so—except that, once again, he is able to parade yet another liberal dimwit who gladly confirms the whole thing. In a 1974 essay entitled "Two Cheers for ZPG," Norman Ryder told Americans that "a collective commitment to population replacement is a defensible posture only if we assume that whatever it is that we are proud of must be transmitted biologically." Instead, he argued, we should satisfy our "thrust toward immortality . . . by efforts to ensure that future generations share our values, whether or not they share our genes." In other words, says Carlson, what we have is a "decadent intelligentsia presiding over collective suicide."

At the heart of Carlson's analysis of contemporary society is his archeological unearthing of the "family wage," a historical phenomenon utterly critical to our time but still largely unrecognized. In *The Family Wage*, the Rockford Institute has dedicated a whole volume to curing this historical amnesia.

The family wage was born of nineteenth-century reform and eventually adopted through legislation, court decisions, and widely observed social customs. Its purpose was to guarantee

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a "living wage" to the head of every family. Its main strategy was to raise the income of male heads of households by closing the labor market to children and married women. This purely social market intervention accomplished two things: it allowed married women to stay home and raise their children, and it raised men's wages by limiting the size of the work force. The result was a "living wage," by which a man, in doing a week's work, could provide for his wife and family.

The horror of nineteenth-century capitalism, after all, was that it made no distinctions among men, women, and children. After installing their labor-saving machinery, factory owners were only too happy to dismiss high-priced journeymen and hire their wives and children instead. Carlson documents this phenomenon by citing a stunning passage from Friedrich Engels's *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, in which Engels described a Yorkshire craftsman sitting at home darning socks while his wife and children worked at the factory. "There is plenty of Wark for Wemen and Bairns [children] in this quarter but very little for men," the tearful fellow told Engels. "T'world is turned upside down." Engels blamed this "universal decadence of family life among the workers" on capitalism.

Karl Marx criticized the same conditions and fully expected them to lead to revolution. A panoply of worldwide reformers thought differently. Labor unions, progressive Catholics, social-gospel Protestants, Progressives, and feminists—all joined together in the attempt to create a "family wage."

The most self-conscious effort was made in Australia, where national industrial boards fixed men's wages at a level that could support a "family of five." Women's wages were set at 54 percent of that level. Unfortunately, these efforts soon bumped up against the laws of supply and demand. Higher men's wages only made it more attractive to employ women and children. A 1916 survey found that, after twenty years of effort, four times as many women and children were in the work force as in 1896.

Seeing the failure of the Australian effort, reformers in Europe and America took a different tack. They set about shortening hours, improving working conditions, and setting minimum wages for women and children. By raising the price of female and child labor, they made it more economical to hire men. This movement was generally successful. Minimum-wage schemes for women and children were upheld by the courts—as opposed to efforts to set minimum wages for everybody. Child labor was finally banned (although not until 1940) and women were generally restricted to job categories in which they did not compete with men.

The family wage was also enforced through a widely observed, although never fully legislated, rule that married women could not hold full-time jobs. The logic was obvious. If one married woman worked, she would lower another man's wage. This would encourage him to send his wife to work, lowering still another man's wage, and so on down the line. Very quickly, the system would unravel and all women would be impelled back into the work force. Single women were allowed to pursue careers because they were supporting only themselves. Allowing both a man and his wife to earn full salaries, however, was considered an unethical "double-dipping."

The system left only two groups dissatisfied. The first was the business-owners themselves, who wanted to be free to tap cheap labor. The National Association of Manufacturers was a perennial opponent of family wage schemes. The second was a coterie of radical feminists—for many years concentrated in the National Women's party—who did not care about preserving the family but wanted equal access to the job market. (According to an old rumor Carlson uncovers, the National Women's party was being secretly funded by the National Association of Manufacturers.)

The family wage went by the boards in the late 1950s, probably beginning at the moment Betty Friedan was asked to leave her newspaper job after getting married. Friedan became the prototype of the college-educated, upper-income woman who was not happy with raising children or doing volunteer work, but wanted a full-time, salaried job. In 1964—as a kind of morbid joke—a Virginia congressman proposed that "discrimination against women" be attached to the Civil Rights Act, which was aimed primarily at helping blacks. The burgeoning bureaucracy soon decided that women made a more attractive reform constituency than blacks, and the family wage was on its way to oblivion.

Si monumentum requiris, circumspice. Today we live in a world created by the collapse of the family wage. Labor-force participation, originally perceived as a fetching option for well-educated women, has become a necessity for nearly all women. It bears down particularly hard—as Carlson grimly notes—on families just starting to incur the enormous expense of raising children. Even the Democrats have become unnerved by the relentless economic pressures that force 50 percent of new mothers back into the work force. Oblivious of all causality, however, the Democrats blame it on Ronald Reagan.

Yet don't think for a minute that liberals don't understand what's going on when their own interests are at stake. Jean Bethke Elstain, one of the co-authors of *The Family Wage*, tells of being savaged by a radical feminist a few years ago after casually suggesting that the family wage wasn't such a bad idea. Reinstituting the system, her critic charged, would require a "massive downward redistribution in income." Now that's real socialism for you!

In these two books, Carlson and his colleagues have given us a very clear idea of where we are and how we got there. Much more difficult, however, is proposing where we should go next.

Carlson admits he has toyed with the idea of a "natural" family wage—the notion that, if left to its own devices, the market may create a system in which women are not forced to work. But he is not too optimistic. Lacking other alternatives, he proposes a series of tax breaks to families with children that would cost the Treasury $40 billion a year. He would finance these losses by raising tax rates 1.5 to 2 percent. Such a shift in incentives would encourage mothers to stay home and raise their children—more of them—while giving fathers a better chance to make a living. Ironically, in contemporary America, families with children have become just another special-interest group.

Not that Carlson should in any way be confused with his liberal counterparts, who want to socialize parenthood through national day care, child allowances, and so forth. As Carlson points out, their schemes would only create a loveless, depersonalized, day-care society (and make single-motherhood economically more viable). In addition—as the Swedes have shown—"parents relieved of financial, social, and moral responsibility for their children soon lose interest in offspring altogether."

Whether the family can be put back together again, neither Carlson nor any of his co-authors seem sure. Reading Carlson, I am reminded of *The Fantastiks*, the early 1960s play about a suburban boy and girl who are tricked into marriage by their conniving fathers. Bequeathed with perfect domesticity, the couple soon decide "this plum is too ripe." They abandon each other for a life of adventure. But after many disappointments and disillusionments they eventually reunite, deciding that the calm, domestic life they left behind really wasn't so bad after all.

America, it seems to me, is slowly finding its way back to marriage and childrearing in much the same way. That is why I cannot completely share Carlson's pessimism. Like many others before him, he may be underestimating the enormous resiliency of the American people. As an antidote to liberal civilization, however—and as a source of that resilience—Carlson is unsurpassed. □

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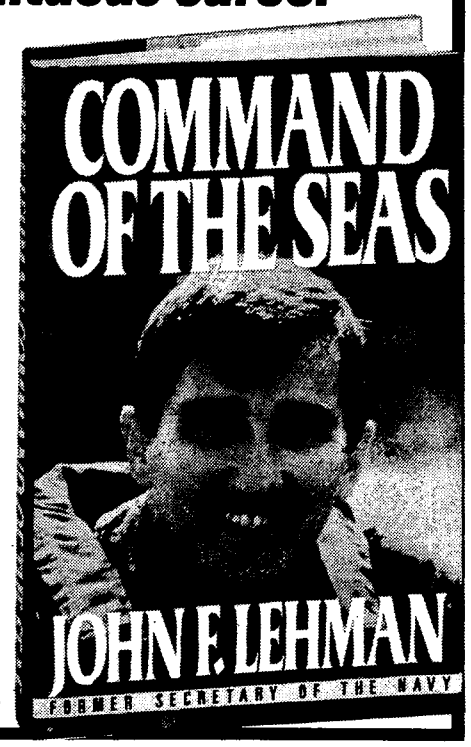

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HARVARD DIARY: REFLECTIONS ON THE SACRED AND THE SECULAR

Robert Coles/Crossroad Publishing/$16.95

THAT RED WHEELBARROW: SELECTED LITERARY ESSAYS

Robert Coles/University of Iowa Press/$24.95

Francis X. Rocca

A few years ago, before starting a lecture on the "Literature of Social Reflection" (a course for Harvard undergraduates that dwells on suffering and sacrifice in life and literature), Robert Coles was preempted by a prankster from the *Harvard Lampoon*. The Phool (an initiate into the *Lampoon*) walked to the front of the class and performed an uncanny imitation. He employed the professor's pacing and a characteristic mannerism, tugging at his sweater. His monologue recounted a fanciful highway pile-up, ostensibly witnessed by the professor on the way to work in a Volvo. In fact, Coles drives a BMW, but the mimic's plaintive tone, overwrought and tortured locution, and discursive remarks that combined the routine with the disastrous, were all ridiculously apt. Yet the class did not laugh. The professor walked in, obviously bewildered, and the Phool ended his bit. After a moment's silence a woman rose and proclaimed: "We love you, Dr. Coles!" The room filled with applause.

Except for practitioners of self-help quackery, Coles could be the best-known psychiatrist in America. More than twenty years ago, with a study of black and white children in the South during the civil rights movement, he began *Children of Crisis*; the best-selling series has stretched to five volumes, including *Migrants, Sharecroppers, Mountaineers* and *Eskimos, Chicanos, Indians*; the last one so far is *Privileged Ones*, about the children of affluence. In this Pulitzer Prize–winning series, which constitutes his major scholarly contribution, he combines techniques of ethnography, oral history, and psychoanalysis in long but readable first-person accounts, illustrated with diagnostic crayon drawings by the children. In total, Coles has written more than two dozen volumes on psychiatry, social problems, literature, and religion. And though he is nothing like the advice columnists and radio shrinks, who make casual diagnoses and prescriptions, Coles has written for their same vast audience: for instance, his recent cover story—"Grandparents: Can They Love Too Much?"—in the senior citizens magazine, *50 Plus*.

In an age that lacks a moral authority, Coles serves as a professional conscience of the professional class. For example, although his primary affiliation is with Harvard Medical School, he has undertaken the commendable and quixotic mission to teach *Bleak House* and *The Great Gatsby* at Harvard's law and business schools, respectively. He elicits a sense of guilt from his students and teaches them to assuage it confessionally. They can follow the example of their professor's contrition, as he expounds on his dilemmas and failings as a physician, a teacher, and a Christian.

Harvard Diary is a collection of columns that originally appeared under that title in the *New Oxford Review*, a monthly published by Roman Catholic laymen (Coles is an Episcopalian). The articles concentrate on religion and moral philosophy, through a variety of topics: exemplary lives (Dorothy Day, Edith Stein), current controversies (abortion, pornography, school prayer), and eternal questions (God's grace, wealth vs. poverty).

Throughout, Coles emphasizes the predicament of a Christian in a secular community, with inevitable political implications. He calls himself "a social conservative, a political liberal, an economic populist or egalitarian." What he is, is a conservative by temperament, with a vague sense of obligation to liberalism. He laments the vicissitudes of a market economy no less than the "spiritual poverty" that afflicts the most prosperous capitalists. On the other hand, he is frankly anti-Communist and suspects that "Christian socialism" is more socialist than Christian. And he puts no faith in liberalism as a remedy for the evils of capitalism, or as a bulwark against totalitarianism. On the so-called social issues he is less ambivalent: abortion is "an affront to the Lord"; for homosexuals to identify themselves culturally and politically by their sexuality is "abhorrent"; women should be free to raise their own children, not forced to seek respectability in careers. These are not remarkable opinions, except at Harvard.

This book is largely a jeremiad about "the modern, agnostic, liberal sensibility" (known in more polemical parlance as "secular humanism"), as codified in the social sciences—especially psychology. Coles fulminates on the distortions and abuses of that discipline as a "faith":

> The result is everywhere apparent: parents who don't dare bring up their children, from infancy on, without recourse to one expert's book, then another's; students who are mesmerized by the talk of psychological "stages" or "phases" and "behavioral patterns" and "complexes"; grown-up people who constantly talk of an "identity crisis" or a "mid-life crisis"; elderly men and women who worry about "the emotional aspects of old age," and those attending them at home or in the hospital who aim at becoming versed in steering the "dying" through *their* "stages" or "phases" . . .

The worst influence of this "secular idolatry" is that it distracts well-meaning clergy from spiritual duties, in order to cater to the temporal needs of their flocks.

In the moral wasteland Coles surveys, individuals stand out who have acted in fidelity to their principles, and in defiance of blatant oppression or insidious conventions; who have suffered meaningfully in service to others, or to a higher cause, or to both. These are Coles's heroes, more or less saints. They include the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the philosopher Sister Edith Stein, who were killed by the Nazis. A favorite of Coles is the mystic Simone Weil, a refugee in England during World War II, who hastened her own death from tuberculosis by choosing to eat only as much as her compatriots in occupied France. To be sure, Coles also celebrates those who lived their biblical three-score and ten, more or less, such as Dorothy Day, the founder of the *Catholic Worker*, and the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. Yet the most inspiring stories are of those who made the supreme sacrifice, or who at least died before their time. The rapturous style in which he memorializes the fallen is reminiscent of Catholic devotion to the cultus of a martyred saint.

Coles, of course, has no hope of martyrdom. He is cursed by luck; at least he curses his own luck, continually. He decries the arrogance and selfishness of his "ilk," a recurring word by which he means, variously, "the intelligentsia," psychiatrists, "well-educated and successful Anglos," or simply the affluent. Here he would seem to be squarely in the liberal camp, but he is following an older tradition: his humility is on the authority of the Gospels. And as he envies the poor their spiritual advantages promised in the Sermon on the Mount, he must also envy the punishing respect that victims of conscience enjoy. It is not hard to think of him, who is disillusioned with his privileged circumstances and who eulogizes his heroes with such vicarious fervor, as a Walter Mitty of moralists, lapsing into fantasies of self-sacrifice and grand suffering.

As the basis for his reflections on moral, social, and political matters, Coles prefers fiction and poetry to the cut-and-dried social sciences, because literature "does not shun or try to conceal this life's paradoxes, inconsistencies and contradictions." *That Red Wheelbarrow* is a collection of his book reviews and longer literary essays from the pages of publications as diverse as the *New England Journal of Medicine* and the *American Poetry Review*. These articles might have been compiled more selectively, to less redundant effect. Certain words, phrases, anecdotes, and quotations recur so often that they obscure what is often astute moral reasoning. Coles espouses intellectual humility, but he has deemed it worthwhile to reprint for posterity seemingly every word of literary commentary he has published.

At his best, Coles shrewdly assesses the honesty and fairness of his favorite writers. He points out that, in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, James Agee spared the impoverished tenant farmers an examination of their racism, and portrayed them as sinless. Coles appreciates the subtlety of Dickens's social vision: that the well-off are themselves victimized and corrupted in their oppressive relationship with the oppressed. And on the other hand:

> [Flannery] O'Connor knew that the poor, the uneducated, can also be thoroughly impure, as wretched spiritually as the rest of us who are far luckier. Did Christ promise *every* poor person admission to heaven? A socioeconomic fact become an existential one!

In the Coles literary pantheon, William Carlos Williams is the most revered. This book's title is a reference to Williams's famous poem "The Red Wheelbarrow" ("So much depends . . ."). Williams was something of a mentor to Coles; he urged the younger man to study medicine, and corresponded with him until the older man's death. Irrespective of admiration and affection, it is natural that Coles, who can sermonize broadly on the slightest pretext, devotes so much space to Williams, whose minimalist verse lends itself to the most profuse elaboration. As Bruce Bawer put it recently in the *New Criterion*, "[Williams] makes it

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easy for critics to look more important than the poems they're writing about."

Indeed, Coles monopolizes this book with more than his share of "Augustinian self-scrutiny," a quality that he praises in Williams, Weil, O'Connor, George Eliot, and George Orwell. These authors are the guests of a solicitous host, who nevertheless repeatedly interrupts them, and steers the conversation inevitably to himself. Throughout the book, as though anticipating this objection, he intones against "narcissism" (perhaps 100 times in 352 pages) and, almost as often, the very "scrupulosity" with which he dwells on it. In Coles's own words: "The preacher is flawed in precisely the respect he denounces during his sermons, and the doctor is ailing even as he tries to heal others."

The ailing Dr. Coles does not perform literary psychoanalysis, though we might expect him to. He vehemently disavows the practice. Several times he invokes Freud's admonition to alienists to "lay down [their] arms" on the artist's terrain. Not that Coles defends psychoanalysis under any circumstances at all; in this book he treats the practice only skeptically or derisively: by its "reductionism" it fails to comprehend human integrity, demeaning the patient and deceiving the doctor.

Instead of a distinguished practitioner of this ineffectual profession, Coles would rather be a novelist or a poet. He resents the constraints of the psychoanalytic vocabulary, which cannot convey ambiguity and irony. But his own prose, free of jargon except between ironical quotation marks, does not justify departures from the language of his discipline. He gives in to verbosity and vagueness. At his worst, he commits labored, homiletic diction: "How ought one live this particular life we happen to have, and what does it mean, actually—if anything?"

This life, in Coles's vision, is rather dismal:

> On our way to another planet or layer of the unconscious or new social structure, we of this century don't worry about the dread every man is heir to, nor do we consider envy, passion, and hate things that will always plague man, however lovingly and scientifically he is reared, and in whatever social, political, or economic system. . . . Necessarily, said Plato, the Fates can never be thwarted, and they cannot be thwarted today, even by a million computers and consulting rooms. Necessarily, says [Cormac] McCarthy, the dark is out there, waiting for each of us. Necessarily, our lot is assigned; we have to contend with our flaws, live with them, and all too often be destroyed by them.

The frequent references to Augustine are not casual after all. Though tempered by tolerance and erudition, it is mostly pessimism—which Chesterton called Luther's corruption of Augustine—that infuses these books. Coles's agonizing never reaches a conclusion. Insistently, intelligently, he disturbs middle-class complacency, but he offers no alternative, leaving the morally serious reader merely discouraged.

Most troubling is the virtual absence of humor. The painfully earnest tone is never relieved by the "mocking sense of humor with respect to itself" that Coles misses in scholarly life. His emotional range is between anxiety and resignation, with a few oscillations toward despair or ecstasy. While he tries several times to evoke the impression of Jesus "as He walked Galilee," and to contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation, Coles does not appreciate what Chesterton sensed: that "there was some one thing that was too great for God to show us when He walked upon our earth; and I have sometimes fancied that it was His mirth." □

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LIABILITY: THE LEGAL REVOLUTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Peter Huber/Basic Books/$19.95

Michael Fumento

The United States has by far the highest per capita number of lawyers of any nation in the world. But you already know that, more or less. What you probably don't know is what all those lawyers do; that is, the ones who aren't parking cars, waiting tables, or trying for the third time to pass the California bar. Peter Huber thinks that a lot of them are fighting tort lawsuits of very dubious value or with questionable rewards, and he has chosen to write a book about them. A few examples:

- A contestant in a refrigerator-carrying footrace recovered for injury to his back.
- Two men who stuffed a hot-air balloon into a commercial laundry dryer, which then exploded, recovered damages from the manufacturer of the machine.
- The occupant of a telephone booth demolished by a drunk driver collected from the booth manufacturer.

Then there are the grossly destructive or expensive awards:

- The city of South Tucson, Arizona, had to pay $3 million to a police officer who was shot by a fellow officer—an award that amounted to $400 for every resident of the city.
- *Soldier of Fortune* magazine will probably shut down if it loses its appeal over a suit concerning a disguised ad for a contract killer placed in its classified section. (Why couldn't he have placed the ad in the *Nation*?)
- A jury awarded the survivor of a Ford Pinto gas-tank explosion $2.5 million in compensation for injuries and *$125 million* in punitive damages, even though no malevolent motive had been shown, as was traditionally necessary. (The trial judge cut the punitives to $3.5 million.)

The original purpose of tort law was to keep the king's peace: disputes were to be resolved in a courtroom proceeding instead of in an open-air free-for-all. Today, of course, that sort of tort law provides afternoon TV drama on "People's Court." The *ostensible* purpose of modern tort law, however, is to compensate for injury and deter intentional wrongdoing or negligence. But, as Joel Hyatt would say (albeit for a different purpose), "somewhere in all these dusty lawbooks a great idea got lost."

In days of yore (which is to say as recently as twenty years ago), Huber tells us, much of what now comes under tort law came under the law of contracts. Unfortunately, the contracts were sometimes disastrously one-sided and amounted to little more than *caveat emptor.* For example, in 1937, the Massengill Company began shipping an early sulfa drug in a raspberry extract and alcohol base that had never been tested in animals for safety. One hundred users promptly died. Massengill was apologetic, but little more: if the users wanted a guarantee of safety, the company conveniently reasoned, they should have demanded one before buying the product.

But as post–World War II America grew increasingly affluent and life expectancies lengthened, individual litigants began contesting such one-sided contracts in the courts. The courts knew injustice when they saw it and tried to redress the situation. One result was that these companies could no longer be assured of getting away, perhaps literally, with murder. Another was that judges expanded the scope of their jurisdiction and that of the jurors to a point where they were dispensing "justice" with little regard to economic realities or the law.

An early target was the insurance companies, which found courts rewriting their policies if it turned out the policyholder hadn't bought enough of the right type of insurance. Courts "discarded virtually every legal rule that had previously allowed insurers to define risk pools with workable precision," writes Huber; the result was that private insurance would inevitably decline. Intangible injuries, such as unintentional infliction of severe emotional distress, had been traditionally limited for the obvious reason that, if it were carried out to the extreme, practically anyone could be made liable to practically anyone else for practically anything. This wall, too, has been rapidly crumbling, with teachers now collecting damages "for the mental trauma of being exposed to prayers unconstitutionally included in two holiday assemblies."

By far the greatest change in liability, however, has occurred in product safety. At one time "strict liability" (meaning that causation must still be proved but negligence need not) was applied only to keepers of wild animals and persons who engaged in inherently dangerous activities such as dynamiting. Now manufactured products from dynamite to dominoes fall under the strict-liability rule. Originally, the product needed to be defective in and of itself, but soon it was enough to establish that another manufacturer had a better design of the product, or merely that a better design was feasible. It also became immaterial that a consumer had bought an inherently weaker design in order to save money. Thus a jury fined Honda $5 million for its "reckless" act of using lighter materials than those used by some other manufacturers that year.

Occasionally, the potential defendants fought back, but success would prove short-lived. For example, companies received a temporary reprieve when they began including express disclaimers of liability with their products or services. But, writes Huber (with a characteristic indulgence of metaphor):

> The [reformers] welcomed the arrival of express disclaimers much as a pack of chimpanzees welcomes a python, with much howling and chest pounding and waving of arms and throwing of rocks. The main reaction seemed to be outrage that anyone would dare to block the march of progress quite so brazenly and unapologetically. . . . So there began a lengthy siege of the paper battlements, an arms race of verbal escalation and counterescalation between rival legal battalions. The objective for the reactionaries was to write disclaimers of liability that would stick. The objective for the reformers was to get over, under, or around disclaimers one way or another.

And the reformers won again. They always did. But each time they left a loser in their path, and ultimately, the biggest loser would be the consumer. For each plaintiff who won $1 million in the tort liability lottery, there were 100,000 consumers surrendering $10. Call it the tort liability tax. It's levied on virtually everything we buy, sell, and use, accounting for 30 percent of the price of a stepladder or small airplane and over 95 percent of the price of childhood vaccines. Because of this tax, writes Huber,

> you cannot use a sled in Denver city parks or a diving board in New York City schools. You cannot buy an American Motors "CJ" Jeep. . . . The tax has curtailed Little League and fireworks displays, evening concerts, sail-board races, and the use of public beaches and ice-skating rinks.

And as is the case with most of the taxes paid to the federal government, we don't get our money's worth here either.

In theory, this shifting of money deters unsafe activities. But, despite some incredibly high awards, on the whole the little man is not much more protected than he was before. Huber quotes a victorious plaintiff as saying that his lawsuit was like playing "Wheel of Fortune," and points out that this is exactly what tort litigation is—a game of chance. Most wrongs, for whatever reason, never get to court. And when they do, they still often go unredressed.

What we need is a system that helps prevent those wrongs without forcing a spin of the wheel. Unfortunately, while there's no doubt that deterrence is taking place, the tort liability method is so utterly haphazard that what it deters has no relation to what the potential cause of harm is. Liability law

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from the beginning was *meant* to compensate, and however well it may or may not do so, the aims of compensation and deterrence are simply too disparate. Indeed, says Huber, they may be opposing:

> Effective deterrence requires a clear point of responsibility, but generous compensation depends on a broad tax base to sweep in at least one or two deep pockets. Deterrence requires swift, well-timed justice; compensation requires looking as far forward or backward in time as may be necessary to find funds. Deterrence depends on solid proof of cause and effect; broad compensation depends on ignoring the same as much as possible.

Effective deterrence means "the buck must stop somewhere certain, definite and predictable," adds Huber. "Effective compensation depends on simply sending the bill somewhere or other, here or there, as may be convenient for securing funds in the particular case."

Huber gives one especially chilling instance of deterrence run amok: "According to the [then] director of the National Cancer Institute, many physicians refuse to prescribe potentially curative doses of cancer chemotherapy for fear of litigation over side effects, and thousands of patients may die needlessly each year as a result. . . .

"In its search for witches," says Huber, "the modern tort system has undoubtedly found a few and reduced them to ashes. But too many wonder drugs have also been gathered into the flames."

But what to do? The basic answer, says Huber,

> is not to abandon contracts, as the [reformers] did so briskly and casually, but to modernize it. The time-tested legal tools that promote informed private or public choice about risk and safety, and the use of direct insurance against the hazards that remain, promise far better than the liability spiral we are riding today. Private contract can be resurrected in new forms that channel incentives toward more care by providers and better insurance against accidents.

The rebirth of contract, Huber writes, "can reconcile the generous and protective impulses of an affluent modern society with the venerable legal principles of cooperation and consent."

Among the examples he cites of this rebirth is a first-party insurance policy offered through high schools to their athletes. According to this plan, when a serious accident occurs the injured athlete is immediately offered compensation for all medical expenses and a modest but certain disability benefit; in return the student agrees not to sue the school. The system appears to work remarkably well, and has now been adopted by two-thirds of all school districts.

What is needed, ultimately, is the complete uncoupling of deterrence from compensation. Tort law cannot serve two masters. But for now, legislatures can begin putting back power into contract, and judges can recognize it.

Huber is realistic. His solutions are neither comprehensive nor utopian. Indeed, utopianism, he says, is the underlying fatal flaw that runs like a crack through the middle of liability law reform. But Huber's solutions are nevertheless practical. States will continue to try to solve the liability problem in foolish ways, as with California's Proposition 103, which reduces auto insurance premiums but does nothing to solve the underlying problem of why those rates are so high in a competitive market.

So don't be surprised to see Huber's ideas eventually being implemented—ever so slowly, to be sure, but implemented nonetheless. Until then, we can keep ourselves occupied watching "People's Court," telling lawyer jokes, and chuckling over lawyer cartoons. "A jellyfish, eh?" says the thoughtful lawyer, eyeing his client. "That's a tough one. But maybe we can sue Jacques Cousteau." □

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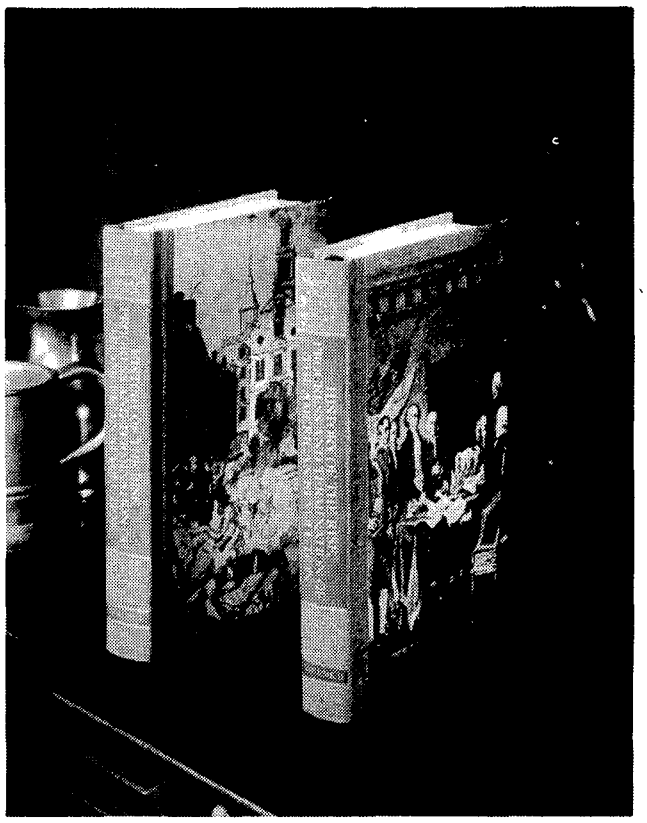

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HIGH NOON IN LINCOLN: VIOLENCE ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER

Robert M. Utley/University of New Mexico Press/$22.50

Wayne Michael Sarf

In the recent R-rated teenage Western *Young Guns*, an obviously psychopathic "Billy the Kid" appalls even his good-bad-boy comrades—murdering one man in an outhouse, blowing out another's brains while shaking hands, and shooting a third after sabotaging his pistol. He is really an endearing sort, however, who before riding off toward the horizon and his destiny plants a climactic slug of vengeance in the head of the archfiend, Major Murphy (played by Jack Palance—a link to horse opera glories past).

Thus, Wild West "heroism" for the 1980s. But the film does reassure us that Henry McCarty (alias Henry Antrim, alias Kid Antrim, alias William Bonney) remains a Kid for the ages. An absurdly vast outpouring of art, music, pseudohistory, and simple, unassuming trash—films, teleplays, novels (dime and otherwise), stage melodramas, poems, and an Aaron Copland-scored ballet—has thrown him into every conceivable role, from hero to villain to victim. Historically insignificant, he becomes food for the mythologist, or perhaps the sociologist—"less interesting as a human being," as Peter Lyon once noted, "than as a sort of glorified Rorschach inkblot by which one may elicit fantasies and so judge their inventors. . . . The face is blank, but it comes complete with a Handy Do-It-Yourself Kit so that the features may be easily filled in."

While the Kid's chroniclers spilled rivers of ink, the arena in which he was a minor combatant, New Mexico's "Lincoln County War," became our most frequently rehashed frontier feud. But aside from the Kid's presence, said "war" held small satisfaction for the romantic. Nor could it be recommended to lovers of chivalry; if cloud-dwelling scribes such as Walter Noble Burns (in his 1926 bestseller *The Saga of Billy the Kid*) persisted in glamorizing a "Kid" who murdered in cold blood, they could at least argue that everybody else in Lincoln was doing it.

Other writers, including such dedicated New Mexican amateurs as Maurice Garland Fulton, Robert N. Mullin, and William A. Kellaher did write of the conflict as a whole—while failing to provide the nonsense required for wide popularity or impact. For if such events paradoxically achieve "historical" importance largely because so much rot has already been written about them, their intrinsic allure can still hold more sober historians. Perhaps residence in New Mexico has increased the risk for Robert M. Utley, already the author of *Four Fighters of Lincoln County*, but best known for such notable works of military and Indian history as *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation*. The title *High Noon in Lincoln* conjures forth a Gary Cooperish image that is immediately knocked down with a warning: "Readers who must have a sympathetic character to identify with may put this book down now." Having hoped to find at least one—but not being the sort to create them—Utley firmly brands the Lincoln bloodletting "a war without heroes."

"There are not many nice people here," complained John Henry Tunstall while describing Santa Fe in letters home, noting the Mexicans—"greasers"—and regretting that commerce appeared "in the hands of the jews (sic) who have their sons & brothers with them always." But having "planted himself in a world scarcely less alien to his London home than the moon," young Tunstall rode on to seek his fortunes in Lincoln County, which contained fewer than 2,000 citizens—most of them armed. It was "about the 'toughest' little spot in America," he asserted, meaning "the most lawless, a man can commit murder here with impunity." Indeed, casual violence was casually viewed, and when the Englishman observed mildly that one killer seemed "rather bad medicine," an acquaintance protested (according to Tunstall) that the gentleman "gets mad quick, and shoots quick, but he's a good shot & never cripples; none of his men have ever known what hurt them & I really think he is sorry for it afterward when he cools off." Encountering Alexander A. McSween, the town of Lincoln's only lawyer (and a man sufficiently eccentric never to wear even a concealed weapon), Tunstall made of him an ally—or, in the Englishman's view, a tool.

The big fish in Lincoln's small pond was Irish-born Major Lawrence G. Murphy, probate judge, Democratic party ruler, rumored homosexual, winner of government supply contracts, and owner of Lincoln's "big store." In a cashless economy where extended credit became a key weapon of control, Murphy played the genial politico-economic tyrant—fixing prices, buying stolen cattle, dispossessing debtors, and charging Uncle Sam for nonexistent Indians' rations. Even as Murphy's ongoing ruin through drink gave the leading role in "The House" to his partner, James Dolan, John Tunstall moved in to set up a rival store—discreetly backed by a wealthy cattleman, John Chisum, who (John Wayne's 1970 screen portrayal notwithstanding) preferred hiring guns to wearing them.

As Tunstall wrote to his parents, "*Everything* in New Mexico, that pays at *all*," was "worked by a 'ring.'" But he chose to beat them by joining them; despite mythic portrayals of Tunstall as a monopoly-busting idealist, his only professed goal was becoming a "Land Grabber," setting up his own "ring," and getting "the half of every dollar that is made in the county *by anyone*." Utley finds his motives "no less greedy, his intended exploitation of the citizens no less complete, and his style of combat only a little less violent . . ." While Tunstall practiced with his revolver, hired gunmen, and complained about the cost ("for men expect to be well-paid for going on the warpath"), Alex McSween disdained violence, and in fact both sides initially contented themselves with legal maneuverings; but if McSween and Tunstall did differ from their enemies, it was in their reluctance to adopt the Western code. "Fiction writers," Utley reminds us, "did not create the code"—which, while actually influencing men throughout the frontier West, may have reached an extreme form in Lincoln due to contacts with the Texas feud country and a casual attitude toward violence left by the Civil War and Reconstruction:

> The code demanded personal courage and pride, reckless disregard of life, and instant redress of insult, real or fancied—all traits with great appeal to the masculine young adventurers who flocked to the frontier. Nearly everyone carried a Winchester rifle or carbine and a Colt's six-shooter, and if someone wronged you, no matter how trivially, you shot it out on the spot.

"Shot it out" seems an unfortunate phrase here, for while most victims were (unavoidably) armed, the code of personal violence, at least as practiced in Lincoln, failed to stress giving the other fellow much show—even when killers operated (as both sides managed to do) with the blessing of cooperative legal officials. Accused of stock theft, Tunstall was shot down on February 18, 1878, ostensibly while resisting arrest by a Murphy-Dolan "posse." Duly deputized themselves into the justice of the peace's constabulary, McSween-Tunstall "Regulators" responded, as Utley logically explains, in kind: "They could try no one without belying their posture as officers . . . so they simply executed their victims on one pretext or another." Soon even these niceties broke down: the Regulators' masterpiece came when Billy the Kid and five other riflemen hidden behind a Lincoln fence gate gave pro-Murphy sheriff William Brady and a deputy a volley in the back. "Cutting down a lawman from ambush, without warning," deadpans Utley, "violated the code to which most people subscribed."

A climax of sorts was ignited on July 19, when the weak and vacillating McSween tried to seize Lincoln town with roughly sixty gunmen. An epic five-day siege of his own house ensued—though the countless shots fired caused few casualties except in the bat-

Wayne Michael Sarf is the author of God Bless You, Buffalo Bill: A Layman's Guide to History and the Western Film *(Fairleigh Dickinson University Press).*

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tle's final moments. (Recalling one long-range Sharps rifle shot that pierced a Murphy-Dolan man's stomach, smashed his spine, and left him dead after a week's lingering, a McSweenite fondly ranked it "among the great examples of marksmanship.") Even an Army detachment's arrival proved anticlimactic when its eccentric commander decided against interference in a civilian dispute. The house was set ablaze, McSween was killed in the ensuing rout, and his store was looted as U.S. soldiers watched.

That should have been the end of it. The competitors were dead, Murphy-Dolan triumphant over an already declining economic empire. But the feuding continued. Even criminal outsiders rode in, enticed by anarchy; a band called "The Wrestlers" slew so wantonly that, as one resident recalled, "on meeting a stranger on the road both sides cleared for action." The Wrestlers went so far as to commit rape—a crime extremely rare in Lincoln and indeed the West itself. (One newspaper account, cited in Kellaher's *Violence in Lincoln County*, thought it natural to term it an "unnatural" offense.) Struck by these atrocities, Utley responds: "The code sanctioned killing for cause, with the definition of cause left to the killer. The code did not sanction random, mindless, purposeless slaughter, destruction, and pillage. . . . How the code came to be suspended for a month or two can only be explained by the depravity of a few offenders." The comment may seem defensive or naive, but Utley—not one to indulge in false nostalgia—recognizes that all ages have their fashions in crime. (And perhaps a poor code is better than none.)

Newly appointed territorial governor Lew Wallace, who might have become a hero, proved too busy writing *Ben Hur*: "Nudged by the vicarious immediacy of the Holy Land, Lincoln County receded to the far corners of his mind." Declaring an amnesty that somehow came to embrace everyone except Billy the Kid (then pursuing a career in stock theft), Wallace simply *proclaimed* peace and left those most responsible for the war free to re-emerge as respectable citizens. Betrayed (a requirement for the outlaw-hero's résumé) and doubtless feeling unjustly singled out, Billy killed his two jailers and escaped after being sentenced to hang for his part in the ambush of Sheriff Brady, but he still haunted the area; his legend was secured on July 14, 1881, when a onetime acquaintance, Sheriff Pat Garrett (rather a reconciliation candidate, endorsed by James Dolan *and* John Chisum), shot him in a darkened bedroom.

Utley, sailing deftly among the rocks of contemporary evidence, avoids all but a few minor collisions, as when he repeats a poetic story concerning the Kid's jailbreak: told en route to the jail that Bill had already killed another guard, deputy Bob Olinger allegedly observed, "Yes, and he's killed me, too"—just before being blasted by the Kid from an upstairs window. Yet the same eyewitness who had warned Olinger claimed that the deputy was killed *before* he could respond. If the author at times seems detached and clinical (with only participants' words providing the queer black humor that so often leavens accounts of Western lawlessness), we can hardly demand emotions set aflame by the characters or their behavior herein. In this sorry tale, only isolated moments of True Grit or pathos stand out, as when the cripple "Buckshot" Roberts drives off attacking Regulators despite a fatal wound; or when Mrs. McSween vainly pleads with the soldiers to let her husband surrender to the military rather than be murdered. Utley's findings on the nature and level of frontier violence complement those of other recent scholars; while certain violent crimes were common and seldom prosecuted, such familiar urban crimes as burglary, arson, and mugging were rare: "Bank robbery was unknown because banks were unknown. Stagecoach holdups, frequent elsewhere in New Mexico, were also unknown because stagecoaches, in the usual sense, were unknown. . . ." But the western code, drunken rowdyism, and Indian depredations (or, rather, the *threat* of such depredations) contributed to an atmosphere of violence.

Utley finds four underlying themes in explaining the "war": heavy drinking, the "instant accessibility of firearms," the usual Gilded Age quest for wealth and power, and, most compellingly, the code: "Avenge insult or wrong, real or imagined. . . . Never retreat before an aggressor. Any degree of violence is permissible, including death." One may debate some specifics, such as the incredible statement that "everywhere on the frontier, nearly all men drank nearly all the time, which made nearly all men more or less drunk most of the time." (If only it could be blamed, like the book's nearly invisible semicolons, on the publisher!) As for his assertion that *all* the Lincoln fighters practiced the code in some fashion, surely endorsing violence by one's *employees* hardly qualifies. While writing that his foes "need killing very badly," Tunstall refused all challenges from James Dolan to shoot it out—inspiring a recent sneer in *Montana* magazine (where appreciation of the physical courage implied by the code has not wholly vanished in this era of Uzi-toting crack dealers) that the Englishman was "a coward" who had "turned craven."

The fifth theme, the delight of romancers and bane of historians, was simply Billy the Kid himself, and "beyond all the analyses of meaning, the Lincoln County War's most enduring legacy to the world may well be as a launchpad for the rise of an unknown youth of sunny disposition and deadly trigger finger into one of the mightiest legends of all time." That he assigns Billy a properly minor role here highlights Utley's lack of sensationalism; that he promises us a future, full-length biography underscores the strange fascination of the Kid's life and legend. □

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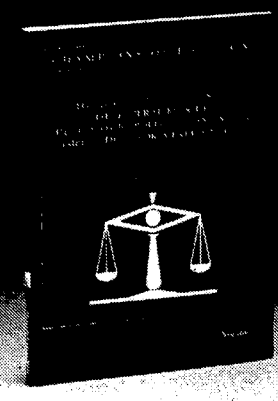

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THE HISTORY AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE OF THE POTATO

Redcliffe N. Salaman; Revised Impression edited by J. G. Hawkes
Cambridge University Press (1985)/$17.95 paper

Edward N. Luttwak

Paraphrasing Sterne, one might say that this book was written in the best of all possible ways: after some forty years of leisurely research undertaken for truly compelling reasons ("in the winter months I was sufficiently occupied with hunting, [but] in the summer, having no liking for golf, tennis, or cricket, I was at a loose end . . ."), the author finally wrote his opening paragraph one sunny day, and then trusted in the infinite mercy of almighty God to supply him with the rest of the 619 pages of text.

That procedure reflected no lack of pressing themes, but rather the opposite difficulty. As the introducer to the Revised Impression tells us with evident unease (he himself being of impeccably narrow scholarship as a professor of plant biology), Redcliffe Salaman deemed it necessary to plough through anthropology, archeology, and botany as well as the agricultural, economic, and social history of many centuries in many countries to confront his majestic subject, that "priceless gift from the recesses of nature's storehouse," *Solanum tuberosum*, the wonderful tuber that fries so well, the potato.

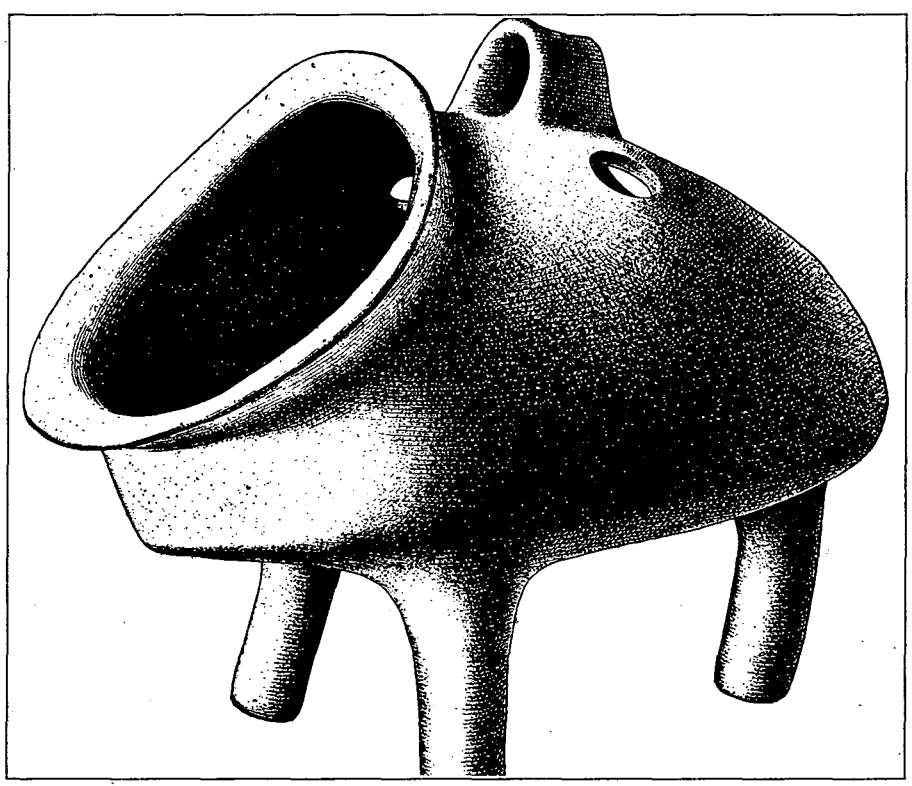
Actually, the author ranges wider still. His discovery that the potato was frequently represented in the pre-Columbian ceramics of the Moche, Chimu, and Nazca cultures of Peru naturally provokes a long iconographic digression amplified by some thirty plates of photographs, mostly showing the hideously distorted and cruelly mutilated anthropomorphic figurines that collectors with much money and little taste nowadays find so attractive. The professor-introducer himself finds them "wonderful"—but that is an opinion that R. Salaman most certainly did not share.

As a man of sound instincts (in the preface he bemoans the fate of the Jane Austen characters whose "careers invariably terminated with their capture and mental sterilization at the altar"—the fate he avoided by his dedication to potatology) Redcliffe S. would never have spoilt the amenity of his mansion in the beauteous village of Barley, North Herts., by displaying such barbarous pottery. *His* only interest, of course, was in the incidental depictions of the potato in those horrid ceramics, which he otherwise vehemently deplores in the captions (e.g., "Fig. 39. Pot, Moche period; a prone figure in which the feet have been amputated above the ankle; the end of the nose and the upper lip have been excised. The swelling on the shoulder may be meant to represent tubers"). Old Redcliffe was willing to suffer the sight of the most brutish artifacts for a mere glimpse of his beloved tubers.

Edward N. Luttwak, the author of Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace *(Harvard University Press), reveals here for the first time his deep-seated potatological inclinations.*

More digressions, each one of chapter length, were provoked by Salaman's urge for completeness in his review of the potato's history in the British Isles, a notoriously ill-defined gathering of geographies. For an Edwardian gentleman—he finished his medical studies at Cambridge in 1895—Ireland's inclusion under the British flag was quite natural, and as a devotee of tubers he could hardly have ignored that most tuberous of islands. Indeed the author retells Irish misfortunes and misdeeds through eight long chapters of potato-history (including Chapter 18, "The Potato's Part in the Tragedy of Ireland," a well-argued brief for the defense of the "inoffensive vegetable"—of course—not of the beastly Irish who were its gluttonous parasites before *Phytophthora infestans*, or Late Blight, had its turn).

Salaman's seemly urge for completeness, however, is manifest in his inclusion of further islands, British only in the cut of their postage stamps but otherwise most un-British. Thus Chapter 28, "The Potato in Tristan da Cunha," wherein the failed 1791 settlement of a Captain Patten in that volcanic islet of the south Atlantic is stoutly denounced (the scoundrel only grew cabbage, turnip, and lettuce) and the 1816 colonization is much celebrated, for those later and wiser settlers not only "planted potatoes" but better still, largely fed on them, along with "the eggs of the molly-hawk," of course, and that trusty resource of any well-stocked larder, "fat, young molly-hawks."



After that, the reader cannot be surprised by Salaman's detailed revelation of the Tristan da Cunhans' excellent health: "In 1926 no caries were observed in the teeth of any of the island youth below the age of 20." (Many statistics of feeble cariation in older age groups follow, but this reviewer's devotion to his readers is tempered by respect for the author's book-selling interest, and obviously it is precisely such gems as the Tristan da Cunha dental statistics for 1926 that are most likely to excite eager purchasers.)

Having digressed to the potato-fed happiness of that remotest south Atlantic rock, Salaman must regress to Ireland, ever-ready as any good and altruistic Englishman to chastise the benighted Irish for their own good:

> In so far as their dependence on the potato and the large quantities they consume is concerned, the people of Tristan da Cunha closely resemble the Irish of the mid-nineteenth century; but there the analogy ceases. In the one case the potato has been a major factor in the degradation and misery of the people, in the other it is merely a rather overworked article of diet, the cultivation of which, so far from inducing anti-social repercussions, has done much to encourage the energy and self-respect of the individual whilst tending to conserve a uniform structure in the social organism.

Quite. That makes all the difference, along with fat, young molly-hawks, of course.

After 516 pages of potato-focused text, the reader will not be surprised that Chapter 29 on that other British island, St. Helena, is not detained by the banality of its Napoleonic association. Instead, after the usual preliminaries (a settler-by-settler reconstruction of St. Helena's ephemeral habitations, with points given and withheld according to the tuberosity of their cultivations), Salaman leads us into a fascinating investigation of one of history's greatest unresolved mysteries.

It seems that in 1659 the East India Company sent out a Captain Dutton as governor to administer the island so that it might serve "for refreshing of their servants and people on their return homeward." Even without the benefit of Salaman's science, the East India Company—whose higher wisdom was about to be proved by its ability to enrich Englishmen by having Indians grow opium for sale to Chinamen—knew that there could be no

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refreshment for servants, let alone people, without the priceless gift of nature's storehouse, the wonderful vegetable and so on.

As Salaman notes approvingly, no sooner was Captain Dutton sent out than another vessel was dispatched to supply him with potatoes (and yams and slaves) purchased on the Guinea coast. Now we come to the thrilling investigation, for which Salaman is our Maigret, Poirot, and Sherlock Holmes: the potato that came from the Guinea coast, "was it the sweet-potato, *Ipomoea batatas*, or our potato, *Solanum tuberosum*?" It would be grossly unfair to the expectant reader to reveal the answer so triumphantly uncovered in what follows. Suffice it to say that only deviants lacking in any normal human being's all-consuming interest in every aspect of tuberousness will fail to derive pleasure from Salaman's exciting tale.

In the same chapter there is incidentally recounted another example of the East India Company's superior economic talent—oh, if only we could have such guidance in our own National Economic Commission—which explains why Captain Dutton was provided with yams and slaves as well as the sovereign tuber. "The yam supplied the food on which the slaves were maintained, and it was they who were employed in raising the potatoes whose sale to the visiting ships supplied [the island's income]." No budget deficits and no trade deficits, therefore, in that well-ordered economy, spoilt only by the tragic lack of Tristanese (or is it Cunhanian?) "fat, young molly-hawks."

Unsurprisingly, the molly-hawk shortage had its evil effect: "Drunkenness . . . was rife in all classes" once a military garrison arrived to guard the irascible Corsican. No doubt the British troops at St. Helena were mostly ungrateful Irishmen as British troops tended to be almost everywhere, drink-sodden papists uncaring of the high privilege of serving on an island barren and devoid of idle fripperies perhaps, but enjoying the supreme good fortune of an all-tuberous diet. The curs, Salaman avers with undisguised horror, actually corrupted the innocent potato by distilling it into a potent brew, "the chief cause of the frequent mutinies of the garrison troops . . . [along with] the almost unbroken succession of worthless chaplains under which the island suffered . . ."

Obviously, St. Helena's sorrow is a most sinister portent for ourselves: present conditions in the United States are exactly analogous. Here too the potato is much-distilled, here too we suffer under worthless chaplains, and of course there are no molly-hawks.

Inexplicably, not everyone of Salaman's acquaintance appreciated the urgency of his labors. ("Indeed, there have not been wanting those who have regarded these activities with a shake of the head and an indulgent smile, indicating that nothing, short of mental instability, could excuse a lifelong attachment to the study of [the potato].") Redcliffe N. Salaman accordingly gives a most persuasive explanation for his potatological passion. Born in 1873, degreed at Cambridge by 1895, and retired by sudden illness in 1903, Salaman found himself two years later (with his health completely restored): "Thirty-two years of age, happily married, free from financial cares, and devoted to hunting . . . unconsciously graduating for the part of a Jane Austen character . . ." As noted, it was precisely the lack of hunting in the summer months that set him off on the epoch-making study that was to be completed and published a mere forty-four years later in 1949.

Here then we have a splendid corrective example for those lesser men of science who abandon themselves to the frivolous study of inconsequential atomic particles and trivial viruses. Redcliffe N. Salaman has pointed the way. What is urgently needed now is an equally comprehensive study of the history and social influence of the molly-hawk, especially fat, young molly-hawks. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 9)

City Limits. She really wanted to present a balanced perspective on all this.

And she set about accomplishing this in a sensible and rational way. She contacted state education officials. She contacted other social studies teachers. She asked questions. She solicited materials. What she found, she told me, was that the people at the Central American Resource Center (CARC) were kind, helpful, considerate, full of information—and distinctly left-leaning in their orientation. She then contacted Mrs. Kerston for a countervailing viewpoint. She wanted, she told me, to present "both sides of a very complicated story," and Mrs. Kerston had been recommended to her as a member of an organization that would offer a view of Central American politics that more closely coincided with those of the Reagan Administration, and presumably of Mr. Brock and the editors of *TAS*.

From CARC, she received a list of "about thirty" resource persons and potential speakers, and vast quantities of brochures, pamphlets, study guides, and the like. All of it, without question, was leftist in its orientation. But that, of course, is what one would expect from a leftist organization. Isn't it?

From Mrs. Kerston, our teacher received a list of exactly two resource people and potential speakers, neither of whom could make it to the event. She received a very small quantity of written materials, few brochures, few pamphlets. Almost nothing, in short, to counteract the leftist materials of CARC and its various associates.

This whole exercise strikes me as a profound failure of the right to fight its own battles. . . .

Incidentally, Mrs. Kerston neglected to tell Mr. Brock one other thing. After the Annandale discussion on Central America, my newspaper, the *Annandale Advocate,* conducted a little poll of the students who participated. What had they learned from this experience? Most were simply confused: "It was more confusing after the symposium than before," was a typical response. A few (very few) said something like this: "Before I went to this, I was all for the contras, but now I think the U.S. government is pushing what we think is right on a country that doesn't want our help." Clearly a victory for CARC, that one. But Mrs. Kerston evidently reached a few young souls, because most of the students who weren't simply confused by the whole thing wrote something like this: "After the symposium the situation is much clearer. I was in favor of the contras in Nicaragua before the symposium. After hearing both sides, I was much more in their favor. I am against the Nicaraguan government and what they are trying to do. Both the speakers got their ideas across, but Kathy Kerston made me feel even more strongly for the contras. She was right all the way."

Another victory for a committed political cadre accomplishing its task through emotional manipulation, indoctrination, and exploitation of school children.

—John D. Fisher, Editor
The Annandale Advocate
Annandale, Minnesota

David Brock replies:
The purpose of my article was to highlight the impact a group of committed political ideologues can have on classroom curriculums, particularly in schools that are in the thrall of the loosely defined "global education" concept. I would hardly applaud a similar effort by an opposing group of political ideologues out to promote their own agenda in the schools, which the odd letter from Annandale, Minnesota, seems to be proposing. The point is that the classroom should not be a political battleground, as the left would have it, but a place where a range of intellectually respectable viewpoints can be considered.

In my view, this would exclude the grossly propagandistic materials produced by the Cenral American Resource Center, whch have no place in any school. As for Mrs. Kerston, I fail to see why her efforts to bring some sense of context and balance to the discussion of Central America in her local schools should cast aspersion on the information she provided me for my article. □

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"Shucks, Jesse, I didn't mean *that* kind and gentle . . ."

From the December 1988 issue of
The Radical Capitalist

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FERGUSON

(continued from page 33)

successful than most, and meant to convey a crucial element of the anti-statist philosophy, but a campaign slogan nonetheless, with an accordingly brief shelf life. And on the shelf is where it now belongs. The attempt during the opening ceremony to squeeze a little more meaning out of it—to reify it with a dime-store toy—shows a tendency on the part of the Bush people toward show biz of the most literal-minded sort. There is but one thing to do with that tendency, and here—following Sid—I quote Barney Fife: "Nip it. Nip it *in the bud.*" White House show biz run amok can lead to disaster—next thing you know, someone with the President's ear will suggest he stand on the White House driveway, hold hands with an enormous line of strange people, and sing "We Are The World" for the benefit of the nation's homeless. But of course no self-respecting President would ever do such a thing.

Also ready for quick and permanent shelving is what Beltway believers are starting to call the "kinder, gentler thing." Considering the debased state of political discourse, there was no way such words could survive prolonged use with their meaning intact, and indeed they may already have boxed the President in. In my wanderings during inauguration week, I seldom talked to a left-winger who didn't use the phrase. At a demonstration outside the Inaugural Dinner at Union Station, an animal rights activist asked me, indignantly, "If he believes in a kinder, gentler nation, then why do they have *veal* on the menu tonight? I believe that kindness and gentleness begins in the kitchen." At a Democratic cocktail party a Hill staffer mentioned Reagan's last budget, which Bush will use as the basis for his own budget negotiations, and said: "Kinder, gentler my ass." He was specifically referring to "cuts" in the increase in the allocation for the National Park Service.

The President has tried his best to keep the phrase from getting away from him, even to the point of admonishing Barbara Walters, in a televised interview, that his idea of kind and gentle governance did not involve "being able to match the highest bidder on federal money." So too in his Inaugural address: "No President, no government, can teach us to remember what is best in what we are." It didn't fly with Barbara Walters, and it won't fly with his other adversaries, either. They understand precisely that Bush's purpose in using the phrase was purely exhortatory, that he was referring to private relations among private citizens, an area beyond the clumsy reach of their public mechanisms; but most political careers in the Democratic party have been based on the premise that a pol who pushed for a bigger government was a pol with a bigger soul, and they won't let a right-wing Republican beat them in the big-soul contest. And they'll win the way they've always won: by conflating fiscal prudence and heartlessness. Bush has handed them a club—a heavy number-one wood—to clobber him with, and they won't let it go.

The more obvious and expected anthropological phenomena of inauguration week have been well reported: the limousines clogging the streets, the battalion of bejewelled women in fur, the swirl of parties, the endless, mind-numbing parade following the swearing-in. Poor Sid must have been agog. I myself was disappointed that attention wasn't paid to a more entertaining spectacle: the "Counter-inaugural Coalition for a People's Agenda!" (exclamation in original). The Coalition was disappointed, too. "Twelve column inches in the *Post* all week!" one of the organizers complained to me on Saturday, as the festivities were winding down.

The Coalition prided itself on its diversity: it contained multitudes, ranging from the Women's Community Bakery to the National Organization of Changing Men. Their theme was "1,000 sparks of dissent," although that figure turned out to be a little high. I attended most Coalition events, and the only one that topped 1,000 participants was the "NO HONEYMOON" benefit concert for the Christic Institute on Thursday night, staged at the Warner Theater even as Nell Carter was throwing her weight around for the President-elect at the Inaugural Gala. (The Christic Institute's loony activities, by the way, were well documented in these pages last May, by David Brock.)

The concert featured Kris Kristofferson, Graham Nash, and David Crosby, who, in sheer tonnage, can be considered the left's answer to Miss Carter—although Crosby had the good sense not to attempt an ambitious production number. When he props his bulk on a stool, straps on his guitar, and tries to drape his chubby arms over the instrument, he resembles nothing so much as an upended Beluga with the little fins wagging helplessly. The thrown-back head, cascading hair, and soulful grimace do nothing to diminish the effect, and throughout the evening I half-expected a roadie to emerge from the wings and give him a good dousing with salt water, to keep him from drying out.

Here was an inaugural gala that Sid would die for: no sequins, no *grandes dames* in Scaasi gowns, no odious Sinatra; just a bare stage, muted spotlights, and a sixties over-the-hill-gang singing off-key (a subtle reminder of Ol' Blue Eyes), interspersed with semi-articulate dicta about American evility. The highlight, for my money ($25 a seat!), was Kristofferson, who—perhaps as penance for his role in the TV miniseries "Amerika"—has made several trips to Nicaragua (pronounced, of course, the politically correct way: Neek-ah-RAH-gwah) and gone irretrievably native. "This is the only place in town where they're tellin' the truth tonight," he drawled, and proceeded to hose down the cheering audience with gallons of truth. "They're killin' babies in the name of freedom," began one song. "Sandinista," went another, "you can hold your head up high/you have given back their freedom/you have lived up to your name." And to close the set: "Was a man named Mahatma Gandhi/Just another holyman/who tried to take a stand/My God! They killed him!" Subsequent verses ran through the rest of the pantheon: Jesus Christ, Martin Luther King, and "the Brothers Kennedy." They killed them, too.

After the show was over and the unwashed had been hustled out of the theater, the Christics held an exclusive reception in the lobby for big money types, select journalists, and (of course) the celebrities themselves. Off in a corner, some Christic functionaries sifted through baskets of cards addressed to Rep. Jack Brooks, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, imploring him to "get to the bottom of the Iran-contra scandal." The cards had been handed to the concert-goers, who were cajoled into filling them out, complete with their names and addresses. "We'll mail them, of course," one lady told me, "but the real idea is to start building up a mailing list."

In austere contrast to the other inaugural events I attended, the fare at the reception was modest: cheese and crackers, beer and wine, an enigmatic vegetable dip. I leaned up against the bar and after a while found myself next to Kristofferson, who was quickly besieged by admirers. A pale young woman in black tights grabbed his attention first and held on to it for dear life. On tiptoes she placed her mouth against his ear and began reciting a poem she had written for him. I heard the line, "My soul is a blizzard," and something about an ocean, but not much else. It was a long poem, and other admirers got impatient.

"Can I just share one thought with Kris, *please*," said an exasperated young man in a cream-colored sweater vest. Kris finally dismissed the young woman with a perfunctory, "I really appreciate your spirit. I want you to know that," and then turned to the sweater vest, who launched right in. "Just one point. Isn't what this evening is about is the poets, that if we just draw on the force of the poets—because in the media, let's face it, the poets are tops—and unite with them, then the things that need to happen will start to happen."

"That's the *only* way they'll happen," Kris said. "I've thought about that. I mean, elections won't do anything. These last two elections were the most depressing . . ."

"That's because they didn't have any poets on their staffs!" the young man fairly shouted. "Dukakis, Mondale—they didn't know poetry!"

"They didn't know how to *win.*"

"Because they didn't know poetry! Like that last song you did—'They Killed Him'?"

" '*My God* They Killed Him,' " Kris corrected.

"Yes," said the young man, undeterred, "that's authentic. It summons up the spirits of our ancestors—which of course is the traditional role of the shaman."

Kris bowed his head modestly and looked into his glass of Coke. "Well, people tell me it's a powerful song."

"It is," said the young man, "because what distinguished those kind of people—Jesus Christ, Bobby Kennedy, all of them—was that they were angry, but not judgmental. They saw into the soul of the evil-doer and tried to understand his humanity."

"That's pretty hard to do some times," said Kris.

"Well, the only time I've ever felt so-called God or grace or what-have-you is when I've tried to do that."

"I've tried to do that, too," Kris said, "but I always seem to get stuck on Elliott Abrams. There's no humanity there."

"It's hard to see, I agree. But just imagine him in diapers."

Kris looked at him. So did I, even though I was trying to be inconspicuous.

"Imagine him in *diapers*," the young man insisted. "As a baby."

"I'll try," said Kris.

"It'll work, you'll see," said the young man, and there, as Samuel Pepys said, I took my leave, through the lobby doors and into the fresh night air. Sid can kvetch all he wants to: Thirteenth Street was still clotted with traffic, and though I've never been much of a partisan for tux-clad men and fur-wrapped women in white stretch limousines, I was overjoyed to see them. Consider the alternative. □

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CURRENT WISDOM

New Republic

Observations of a sociological nature from Miss Margaret Carlson, tomorrow's Mother Teresa:

I went to visit one of George Bush's thousand points of light three weeks ago bearing blankets and canned goods collected in the neighborhood. I was hoping to play Lady Bountiful for a moment but instead I got a look at Yuppie Philanthropy in action. All around were people like myself thirsting for a seasonal fix, reassurance that their lives of wretched excess and self-absorption had not drained them of all mercy. Soup-kitchen turns as a way of making reparations aren't to be discouraged just because they make yuppies feel good. They are better than nothing at all. But as you see leather-bound datebooks being pulled out to make lunch dates, and overhear conversations about the best frequent flier programs, you know how slim Bush's vision thing really is. The light of those to whom much has been given is a low-wattage bulb at best; it's no substitute for government programs to feed and clothe and house people.

[January 23, 1989]

Nation

Out on the lunatic fringe, a movie critic contemplates the life of jazz virtuoso Charlie Parker, and into his hallucinatory mind pops Mr. Jesus Christ (1-33 A.D.):

It is not necessarily sacrilegious to say that the two lives, taken as narratives, are remarkably similar. Both stories combine national epic, intense psychological drama and spiritual transcendence. In Parker's case, the story involves a major turning point in the history of black Americans: in their sense of identity, their social and political relations with whites, their self-assertion as artists. Parker, as the key figure in the development of be-bop, was more than a mere symbol of these changes. He lived them; he pushed them further; and he paid the price. By age 34, he was dead—martyred, some would say—only a year older than Jesus. And he was resurrected no less promptly, in graffiti that insisted "Bird Lives."

[October 31, 1988]

New York Times

A little-known scientific debate waged by the Galileos, the Newtons, and the Betty Friedans of our incomparable age:

Scientists disagree on what to call the cold cycle. It was first dubbed La Nina, Spanish for "the girl," to distinguish it from El Nino, which means "the boy," or Christ Child, so named because the warm cycle appears near Christmas. Some scientists objected to La Nina as sexist, however, and substituted El Viego, "the old man," as in Old Man Winter. Still others prefer to avoid all this by simply calling the cycles warm events and cold events.

[January 3, 1989]

Newsweek

Taxing literary commentary from the book pages of *Newsweek* occasioned by the publication of a gob of spit:

Most recent American fiction has been what we're pleased to call realistic: objective narratives of ordinary (though sneakily meaningful) events in the lives of people who are neither heroic nor grotesque. Then what do we call Nicholson Baker's **The Mezzanine**. . . ? Here's the plot: Howie, a young businessman, buys shoelaces at a CVS store on his lunch hour. The subplots? He chats with a secretary, goes to the john and eats a cookie. And thinks about things: the squiggly mark you make after "and 00/100" when writing checks, the lines of dust that never quite disappear when you ply the broom and dustpan. We ask art to hold the mirror up to life: isn't this how most of our days really go? . . . Most of "The Mezzanine," though, simply pays open-eyed, open-ended attention to "the often undocumented daily texture of our lives." It never switches on the rhetoric to bathe details in fake luminosity; it peddles no unifying vision. Some readers may have a problem with that: art, they'll say, must do more. More than show us our lives afresh? Maybe in Baker's next book. But most writers never get *this* far.

[January 2, 1989]

San Francisco Chronicle

The shocking condition of health among students of both major races at Stanford University as reported by Mr. Bill Workman of the "Chronicle Peninsula Bureau":

Several students who live at Ujamaa House, one of several ethnic dormitories, said they felt that their home had been violated by the poster incidents.

Two white freshmen who formerly lived at the dormitory admitted that they defaced the Beethoven poster as a practical joke after dorm students had held a hallway discussion two weeks ago on the possibility that the 19th century composer had black ancestry.

The white students, who have been forced to leave the dormitory, set off an emotional scene at the dormitory Sunday morning when they met with scores of black and white residents, ostensibly to offer an apology.

However, the two students outraged the others even more when they allegedly offered a flippant apology. They recited in unison "One, two, three—We apologize," and tried to pass off the poster as "avant-garde art" according to campus officials.

Although the white students said they had been drunk when they defaced the Beethoven poster, the tension at the meeting became so high that a number of black and white students became hysterical.

Many students "hyperventilated, people were retching, not just black students by any means, and men and women both," said Rachel Wiesen, a resident assistant at Ujamaa House.

[October 18, 1988]

University of Michigan Course Guide (School of Literature, Science & Art)

Greek studies in the modern manner for New Age classicists:

110. Practical Feminism. (1) (Excl). Offered mandatory credit/no credit.

LESBIAN STUDIES. This mini-course will be held the last seven weeks of Winter Term, 1989. Women's Studies 110 will be a broad introduction to the field of lesbian studies. The class will discuss the following topics: lesbian history, lesbian feminist thought, coming out, contemporary lesbian culture, issues of racism and classism within the lesbian community, sexuality, and future visions. Students are expected to take an active role in directing and facilitating the course, as it will primarily center on student discussions of reading and projects. Students will be asked to keep a weekly journal that integrates critical analysis of the readings, classroom discussions, and personal reactions. Grades will be based on class participation, weekly journals, and a final project/presentation to the class.

[Winter 1989]

Vancouver Sun

Whilst visiting greater Vancouver the American actor Martin Sheen offers substantial proof that, as he puts it, he comes from "a land of lunatics":

American actor Martin Sheen has a few words on the free-trade agreement.

"Know who you are dealing with," he tells a Canadian questioner.

"I come from a land of lunatics. When I come to Canada, I see a country that represents the way it is possible to live. But you're stuck with us by virtue of the land mass and we can destroy you in a minute, politically, economically, culturally. . . .

"It's not that we don't love you, it's because we don't trust you. And you aren't our equal partner and never will be.

"We are an empire. Our president is the leader of an empire. . . ."

Sheen mourns all that he believes his country lost with the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

"If the events of November 22, 1963, had occurred in any other country, the United States would have been under martial law. We would have called the Kennedy assassination a military coup, because that's what it was, a coup by the military-industrial complex and we've been living in a police state ever since."

[November 5, 1988]

Washington Post

The thrill of scientific discovery as reported from the digs of historic Virginia:

In what some scholars are describing as a major discovery, archeologists at Colonial Williamsburg have found an artifact that they believe is one of Jefferson's discarded toothbrushes.

[December 16, 1988]

Village Voice

Midst a discourse on the scortatory undertakings of the degenerate Mr. Michael Alig, the *VV* falls prey once again to the Reagan Magic:

At the party, people were able to buy dates with 16-year-olds with play money, the kids getting $50 from Alig to go through with the dates. "There was nothing illegal about it," he says. "I was paying the kids to go out with somebody else—that's not prostitution. Of course I got paid by the club for throwing the event." Alig is a master exploiter, but no more so than Ronald Reagan, whose administration relentlessly whittled away at various forms of aid to dependent children (there haven't been so many homeless kids since the Depression), while cranking up public hysteria over their sexual exploitation. Alig, in his own jaded way, is trying to make fun of hypocrisy rule while desperately trying just to make fun.

[December 20, 1988]

Princeton Spire

Princeton University joins the national transformation of the American university into one vast day-care center:

"Last night, we had a chance to experience what the Creation felt like," says a Princeton student who has been attending a pottery-making workshop on campus led by Princeton's first artist-in-residence, Sasha Makovkin. "We made dust out of dry clay, added water, made lumps of clay, and then formed whatever came to us. . . . We were asked to think, feel, and create with our souls. . . ."

Recently Princeton University exhibited [Makovkin's] work, including Sasha's ceramic mural called "A Ceramic Comic," which he describes as "the story of two blobs who . . . find themselves in a dependency relationship . . ."

[Winter 1989]

New York Post

A magisterial new film, elucidated by the philosophical John Carpenter, its Shakespeare:

"I had this idea for a pair of sunglasses you could look through and see the truth," says the 40-year-old Carpenter, who based "They Live" on an early '60s science-fiction tale. . . . "The sunglasses show things in black-and-white," explains Carpenter, sitting in his hotel suite. The so-called real world is in color. "Sort of like Ted Turner colorizing the classics. You see, the aliens have colorized *us*.

"Then I thought, why not just do this message about the Reagan Revolution being controlled by free-enterprising aliens from outer space? They're dismantling the middle class, the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer. Planet Earth is the Third World to these people. They're Republicans."

[November 2, 1988]

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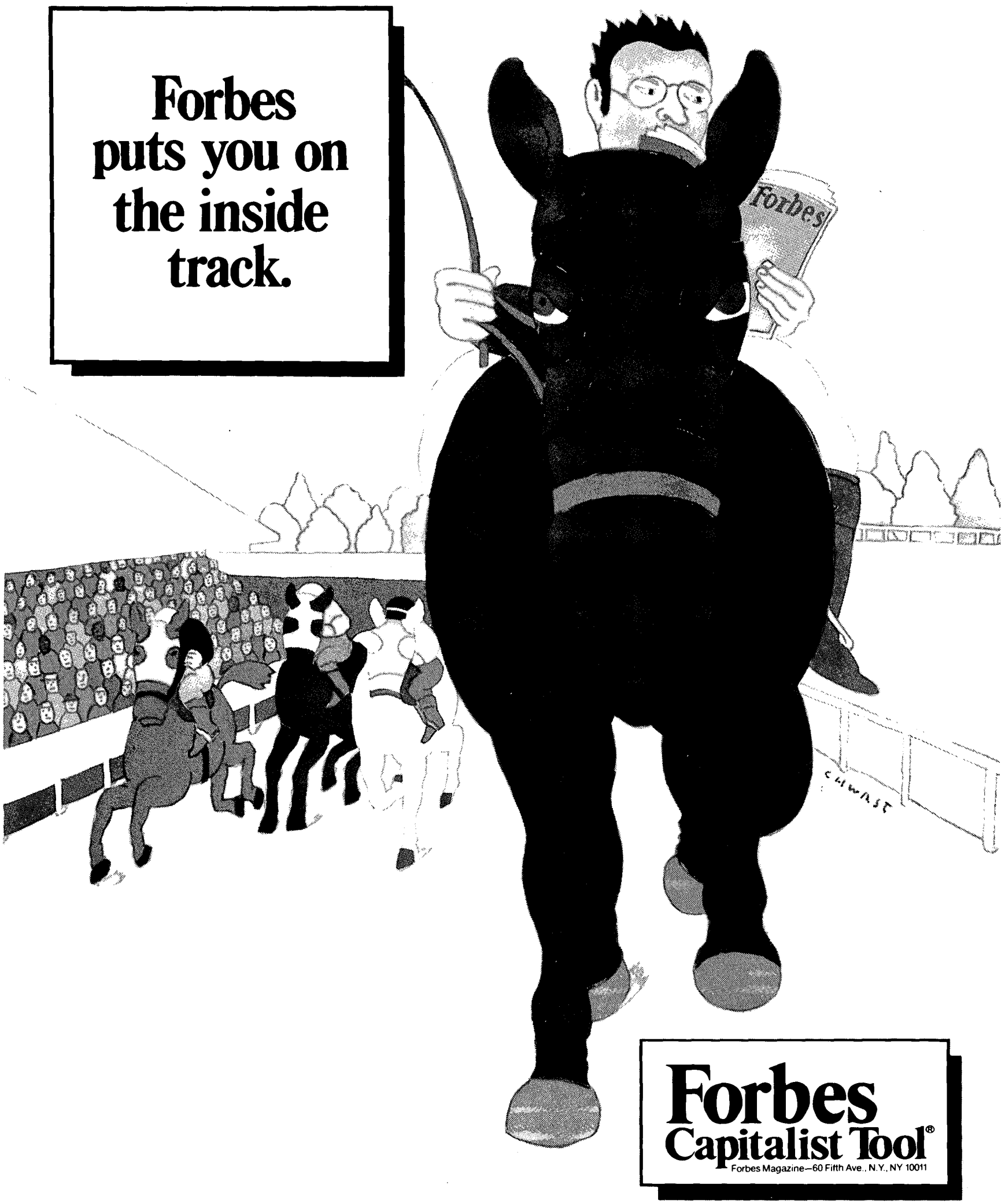

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Despite a media brownout, this book fought its way onto the bestseller lists.

And when you read what it reveals about Teddy and Chappaquiddick, you'll see why.

Ray Kerrison explains it all in his *New York Post* column:

"The biggest surprise — and scandal — of the publishing season is the public's extraordinary demand for a book exposing Sen. Edward Kennedy's fatal escapade at Chappaquiddick, despite a review blackout by the nation's media giants.

This book is titled *Senatorial Privilege: The Chappaquiddick Cover-Up* (Regnery Gateway, $21.95). Written by Leo Damore, it made the *New York Times* non-fiction best-seller list yesterday for the eighth straight week.

Yet the . . . *Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Boston Globe, Time* and *Newsweek* have all boycotted it.

The media blackout is all the more suspicious because Damore's account is a meticulous examination of what happened at the bridge and the aftermath. It was written with the cooperation of Joseph Gargan, a Kennedy cousin, who was involved in the nightmare. . . .

Damore's book leaves no doubt that: a) Kennedy left the party for a romantic interlude; b) he was drunk; c) he drove off the bridge at considerable speed; and d) his license had expired five months earlier.

It discloses how Ted Sorenson, President John F. Kennedy's speechwriter, drafted Sen. Kennedy's fictitious explanation of the tragedy for a national TV audience."

People Magazine shares the enthusiasm:

"An achievement of reportorial diligence, this book tells a story that the most imaginative crime novelist would have been hard put to invent. It is a tale of death, intrigue, obstruction of justice, corruption and politics. It is also one view of why Sen. Edward M. Kennedy was never indicted in connection with Mary Jo Kopechne's death . . . readers will find it hard to put down."

Adds the **Wall Street Journal**:

"Absorbing and definitive account . . . Damore . . . is a disciplined and relentless writer who makes his case more devastating because he never steps back and editorializes. Each falsehood, blunder and evasion is in tight focus. . ."

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